

The Complete  
Little Stories for Bedtime  
by  
Thornton W. Burgess  
1912

The Complete Little Stories for Bedtime by Thornton W. Burgess, 1912.

Expanded and Corrected Edition.

Edited by Peter W. Oehlkers.

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# Little Stories for Bedtime



Header for "Little Stories for Bedtime" used by the *Kansas City Star*.

# INTRODUCTION.

This volume collects stories written by Thornton W. Burgess and syndicated by Associated Newspapers from February 5, 1912 to December 31, 1912. These stories were typically published with the header “Little Stories for Bedtime,” and, depending on the newspaper and available space, a one-column-width illustration.

Burgess’s animal characters had already appeared in a series of stories printed in *Good Housekeeping* and *People’s Home Journal*, collected, along with supplementary material, into *Old Mother West Wind* (1910) and *Mother West Wind’s Children* (1911). According to Burgess (1960), these animal stories were originally written for his young son.

In an article in *American Magazine* (1919), Burgess provided an account of how this newspaper feature came to be:

In the summer of 1911, I turned my attention seriously to story writing... In reading the newspapers I was impressed with the fact that most of them carried little stories for children, but that as a rule these stories did nothing more than amuse. The idea came to me that there was a field for something better, so I experimented in shortening some of my animal stories to the requirements of newspaper space. Then I opened negotiations with a well-known syndicate. The idea was liked, but for one reason or another we got nowhere. I tried another syndicate with no better success... [Eventually] I found a letter from the manager of a newspaper syndicate asking for my stories under the title of “Little Stories for Bedtime.” I went to New York and signed a six-months contract at a very modest figure. It bound me to write six Bedtime Stories a week. If they were a success, I was to have a full-year contract at a moderate advance. (Burgess, 1919, 91-92)

The syndicate was a new one, Associated Newspapers, which had been organized in 1911 to supply “wholesome” features and literary content to afternoon newspapers. By March 13, 1912, there would be twenty-two newspapers in the association, collectively reaching over two million subscribers: *New York Globe*, *Philadelphia Bulletin*, *Kansas City Star*, *Washington Star*, *Atlanta Journal*, *Cleveland News*, *St. Paul Dispatch*, *Omaha World-Herald*, *Oregon Journal*, *Los Angeles Express*, *New Orleans Daily States*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Daily News*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*, *Buffalo News*, *Detroit Journal*, *Des Moines Capital*, *Salt Lake Telegram*, *San Francisco Bulletin*, *Houston Chronicle* and *Sacramento Bee*. (“A Big Newspaper Purpose,” 1912, March 12).

“Little Stories for Bedtime” was a title given to Burgess’s stories by the syndicate. This mirrored existing syndicated newspaper story features, including “Daddy’s Bedtime Story,” “Daddy’s Goodnight Stories,” by “Farmer Smith,” and Howard R. Garis’s “Bed-time Stories” starring Uncle Wiggily. These features were promoted as labor-saving devices, providing a reliable supply of new story material for parents in the evening. (“Daddy’s Bedtime Story” March 9, 1910). While Burgess’s stories appeared primarily in afternoon editions, some papers, such as the *Omaha World-*

*Herald*, chose to run the stories in the morning edition as well.

Initially, newspaper use of Burgess's stories was sporadic. According to Burgess (1919)

The first six months went hard. The newspapers began by using the stories once or twice a week, and with no very great enthusiasm. But by the end of six months every paper on the list was using a story every day. (p. 92)

While it is true that by August 1912, most newspapers running the feature ran it on the date indicated by the syndicate, there was still significant variation among publications. The *Chicago Daily News*, for example, assembled individual stories into longer stories, printed on the children's page on Saturdays, while the *Sacramento Bee* frequently ran the stories out of sequence. The *Baltimore Evening Sun*, an early adopter of the feature, stopped running it altogether by the end of March 1912.

Of the publications on the Associated Newspapers list that were consulted for this volume, the following indicates the first date each paper ran "Little Stories for Bedtime."

*Atlanta Journal*: February 5  
*Baltimore Evening Sun*: February 9  
*Boston Evening Globe*: November 1  
*Buffalo Evening News*: February 29  
*Chicago Daily News*: March 2  
*Houston Chronicle*: February 7  
*Kansas City Star*: March 13  
*Los Angeles Express*: May 24  
*Montreal Star*: September 4  
*New York Globe*: February 5  
*Omaha Evening World Herald*: February 5  
*Oregon Daily Journal*: February 14  
*Sacramento Bee*: March 29  
*Salt Lake Telegram*: February 12  
*Toronto Star*: September 9

As detailed in Appendix 1, letters to the editor praising the feature were published as early as March. In September the *Kansas City Star* reported its popularity among school children and their dismay over a four-day break in the feature from August 30 to September 3. A biographical fact sheet and photograph of Burgess, probably associated with the promotion of *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*, was released to newspapers, which used it as the basis of Burgess profiles. By the end of 1912, Thornton W. Burgess was a name that a great many people knew.

Stories and images included in this volume were sourced from two commercial newspaper databases, Newspapers.com and Genealogybank.com, as well as a collection of pre-publication manuscripts in the Massachusetts Historical Society Thornton W. Burgess archive. All of this material is assumed to be in the public domain.

Published versions of these stories varied among newspapers due to editing and typographical errors. The pre-publication manuscripts are assumed to be the “official” versions of these stories, though even these included occasional misprints which have been corrected in this volume. For stories without pre-publication manuscripts multiple newspaper versions were consulted. The *Kansas City Star* versions tended to be the most reliable. Some newspapers, The *Omaha Evening World-Herald* and the *Los Angeles Express* among them, systematically edited out whole sections of stories before publication.

Many of these stories were reused in other publications. An appendix included in Wayne Wright’s (2000) Burgess book bibliography that locates the newspaper sources of the stories comprising the Bedtime Story-books, the Green Meadow series, and a variety of single-story booklets, was a valuable guide, and note is made after each story in this volume as to re-publication destination, whether it was significantly edited, and the title it was given if that title differed from its original title. This includes one publication not included in Wright’s list, *The Bedtime Story Calendar*, a story-a-week calendar published by P.F. Volland & Co. for 1915 that included many stories from 1912 not otherwise reprinted. Burgess typically edited his stories very lightly, if at all, for republication.

The stories in this volume are numbered from 1 to 275. These are not official numbers. Burgess would later include publication dates and story numbers on his manuscripts. Not having access to the original manuscripts from this period, the dates and numbers used in this volume are best guesses given the sequencing of the stories, compared against the collection of dated pre-publication manuscripts included in the Massachusetts Historical Society Thornton W. Burgess archive. This numbering assumes Burgess (or the syndicate) did not supply a story for four dates: March 7-9 and April 27. The earliest original numbered manuscript available is #583, dated December 22, 1913. My count up to the same date is 579, suggesting that there are either four missing stories, possibly corresponding to the dates above, or a miscount of stories by Burgess. Most newspapers ran Burgess’s stories with the same titles, and these are assumed to be the official ones, and are the ones used at the head of each story in this volume.

Harrison Cady didn’t become the illustrator for the feature until mid-way through 1913. During 1912 four different illustrators served in the role, only one of whom, Robert Ripley, can be definitively identified. It is assumed that the illustrators were part of the Associated Newspaper team; J.N. “Ding” Darling and H.T. Webster, both life-long friends of Burgess, are possibilities. This volume assembles illustrations for given weeks on individual pages. Note that a number of stories in 1912 were apparently distributed to newspapers without illustrations, and be aware that some of the available images are relatively poor reproductions, cleaned up as much as possible for this volume.

While much of the material in this volume will be familiar because of its re-publication elsewhere, there are many individual stories and story sequences that will be new to readers only familiar with Burgess’s books. Reading these stories in sequence also reveals an overall continuity that is signaled but not always realized in

the book series. One important line of continuity, extended through the first few years of the feature, involves the evolution of the character of Farmer Brown's boy. In 1912, the character was largely the enemy of the wild animals, a "thoughtless" boy with a gun who saw them as pests and money-making opportunities. Burgess drew from his own experiences and writing about hunting and trapping in characterizing Farmer Brown's boy. Some examples are included in Appendix 2.

In 1912 "Little Stories for Bedtime," while nature-oriented, remained influenced by the imagery of other talking animal stories, including those of Joel Chandler Harris (Uncle Remus) and Beatrix Potter (See Appendix 3 for more detail about some of Burgess's influences). Burgess frequently depicted his characters in human-like postures or using human accessories such as hats or baskets. I have made note of these "anthropomorphisms" in this volume. Many were removed before re-publication, indicating that this was a concern for Burgess. He also repeated in print fallacies about certain animals, for example, the assertion that owls cannot see in the daytime. These errors have also been noted. Un-noted but clear throughout should be the fact that these are stories about boys; the small number of female characters are almost entirely mother figures.

Finally, it should be noted that some of the stories from this year include language no longer considered appropriate, much of it derived from Uncle Remus and Minstrel show culture. For the sake of having an accurate record of these stories, this language is retained, but its presence here should not be considered an endorsement.



## STORY 1. February 5, 1912.

### Billy Mink Loses a Race

"I'm the fastest swimmer in the Smiling Pool," boasted Billy Mink as he lay sunning himself on the Big Rock.

"You're not either," retorted Jerry Muskrat.

"You can't beat me," said Billy Mink.

"Perhaps I can't. But I know who can," replied Jerry, stretching himself.

"Who?" asked Billy Mink, sitting up abruptly.

"Little Joe Otter!" exclaimed Jerry Muskrat, triumphantly.

"He can't!" snapped Billy Mink.

"He can, too; he can swim circles around you," said Jerry Muskrat.

"Pooh! He can't swim a little bit. I could swim circles around him with my legs tied," boasted Billy Mink.

"Who's that you can beat, Billy Mink?" asked another voice.

Billy Mink and Jerry Muskrat whirled about to find Little Joe Otter just climbing up the Big Rock.

"He says he can beat you swimming with his legs tied," said Jerry, pointing at Billy Mink.

Little Joe Otter laughed until he showed all his white teeth. "Perhaps you can, Billy," said he, "but I doubt it. Tell you what—I'll race you this afternoon for the championship of the Smiling Pool, and you needn't have your legs tied either."

Now Billy Mink is a fast swimmer, a very fast swimmer, indeed, but for all his bragging, right down deep in his heart he didn't want to race Little Joe Otter. However, it was too late to back out, so he agreed to race that afternoon. They agreed to swim from the Big Rock out to Grandfather Frog's big, green lily-pad and back to the Big Rock, and Grandfather Frog was to be the judge.

The Merry Little Breezes carried the news all over the Green Meadows and everybody hurried over to the Smiling Pool — Peter Rabbit, Reddy Fox, Bobby Coon, Jimmy Skunk, Striped Chipmunk, Sammy Jay, old Mr. Toad and all the other little meadow people.

Spotty the Turtle was starter. "Are you ready? Go!" he shouted.

Splash! Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter hit the water together. For a minute nothing could be seen but two little rows of bubbles. Then Billy Mink's little brown head bobbed up in the lead.

"Go it, Billy!" shouted Reddy Fox, dancing up and down in his excitement.

Billy went it! He was the first to touch the big, green lily-pad on which sat Grandfather Frog. Then he started back for the Big Rock. Half way there Little Joe Otter was even with him. Then Little Joe Otter dived. A bubble came up just in front of Billy Mink's nose. Then another and another, each a little farther ahead. All the little meadow people on the bank were shouting themselves hoarse. Billy was almost to the Big Rock and nothing had been seen of Little Joe Otter.

"Good boy, Billy!" shouted someone.

Everyone looked up to the top of the Big Rock. There sat Little Joe Otter kicking his heels<sup>1</sup> and grinning. He had swum under water clear around the Big Rock and climbed up the back side.

"How about swimming with your legs tied, Billy Mink!?" shouted Jerry Muskrat.

But Billy Mink hadn't a word to say; he was too much out of breath.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #35)*

## STORY 2. February 6, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck is Left Alone

Johnny Chuck stood on the doorstep of his house and watched old Mrs. Chuck start down the Lone Little Path across the green meadows toward Farmer Brown's garden. She had her market basket on her arm<sup>2</sup> and Johnny knew that when she returned it would be full of the things he liked best. But not even the thought of these could chase away the frown that darkened Johnny Chuck's face. He had never been to Farmer Brown's garden and he begged very hard to go that morning with old Mrs. Chuck. But she had said "No. It isn't safe for such a little chap as you." And when Mrs. Chuck said "No" Johnny knew that she meant it and that it was of no use at all to beg.

So he stood with his hands in his pockets and scowled and scowled as he thought of old Mrs. Chuck's very last words: "Now Johnny, don't you dare put a foot outside of the yard until I get back."

Pretty soon along came Peter Rabbit. Peter was trying to jump over his own shadow. When he saw Johnny Chuck he stopped abruptly. Then he looked up at the blue sky and winked at jolly round red Mr. Sun. "Looks mighty showery 'round here," he remarked to no one in particular.

Johnny Chuck smiled in spite of himself. Then he told Peter Rabbit how he had got to stay at home and mind the house and couldn't put his foot outside the yard. Now Peter hasn't had the best bringing up in the world, for his mother has such a big family that she is kept busy just getting them something to eat. So Peter has been allowed to bring himself up and do just about as he pleases.

"How long will your mother be gone?" asked Peter.

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1 Anthropomorphism.

2 Anthropomorphism.

“Most all the morning,” said Johnny Chuck mournfully.

Peter hopped a couple of steps nearer. “Say, Johnny,” he whispered, “how is she going to know whether you stay in the yard all the time or not, so long as you are here when she gets home? I know where there’s the dandiest sweet clover patch. We can go over there and back easy before old Mrs. Chuck gets home, and she won’t know anything about it. Come on!”

Johnny Chuck’s mouth watered at the thought of the sweet clover, but still he hesitated, for Johnny Chuck had been taught to mind.

“Fraid cat! Fraid cat! Tied to his mother’s apron strings!” jeered Peter Rabbit.

“I ain’t either!” cried Johnny Chuck. And then just to prove it he thrust his hands into his pockets and swaggered out into the lone little path.

“Where’s your old clover patch?” asked he.

“I’ll show you,” said Peter Rabbit, and off he started, lipperty, lipperty, lip, so fast that Johnny Chuck lost his breath trying to make his short legs keep up. And all the time Johnny’s conscience was pricking him.

*(Mother West Wind’s Animal Friends, chapter 5, “How Johnny Chuck Ran Away”)*

### STORY 3. February 7, 1912.

## Johnny Chuck’s Narrow Escape

Peter Rabbit left the lone little path across the green meadows for some secret little paths of his own. His long legs took him over the ground very fast. Johnny Chuck, running behind him, grew tired and hot, for Johnny’s legs are short and he is fat and roly-poly. At times all he could see was the white patch on the seat of Peter Rabbit’s pants. He began to wish that he had minded Mrs. Chuck and stayed at home. It was too late to go back now, for he didn’t know the way.

“Wait up, Peter Rabbit!” he cried.

Peter Rabbit just flirted his tail and ran faster.

“Please, please wait for me, Peter Rabbit,” panted Johnny Chuck, and began to cry. Yes, sir, he began to cry. You see he was so hot and tired, and then he was so afraid that he would lose sight of Peter Rabbit. If he did he would surely be lost and then what should he do? The very thought made him run just a little faster.

Now Peter Rabbit is really one of the best-hearted little fellows in the world, just happy-go-lucky and careless. So when finally he looked back and saw Johnny Chuck way, way behind, with tears running down his cheeks and how hot and tired he looked, Peter sat down and waited. Pretty soon Johnny Chuck came up, puffing and blowing, and threw himself flat on the ground.

“Please, Peter Rabbit, is it very much farther to the sweet clover patch” he panted, wiping his eyes with the back of his hands.

“No,” replied Peter Rabbit, “just a little ways more. We’ll rest here a few minutes and then I won’t run so fast.”

So Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck lay down in the grass to rest while Johnny Chuck recovered his breath. Every minute or two Peter would sit up very straight, prick up his long ears and look this way and look that way as if he expected to see something unusual. It made Johnny Chuck nervous.

“What do you keep doing that for, Peter Rabbit?” he asked.

“Oh, nothin’,” replied Peter Rabbit, but he kept right on doing it just the same. Then suddenly, after one of these looks abroad, he crouched down very flat and whispered in Johnny Chuck’s ear in great excitement:

“Old Whitetail is down there, and he’s headed this way. We’d better be moving,” he said.

Johnny Chuck felt a chill of fear. “Who is Old Whitetail?” he asked as he prepared to follow Peter Rabbit.

“Don’t you know?” asked Peter in surprise. “Say, you are green! Why, he’s Mr. Marsh Hawk, and if he once gets the chance, he’ll gobble you up skin, bones and all. There’s an old stone wall just a little way from here and the sooner we get there the better!”

Peter Rabbit led the way, and if he had run fast before it was nothing to the way he ran now. A great fear made Johnny Chuck forget that he was tired, and he ran as he had never run before in all his short life. Just as he dived head first into a hole between two big stones a shadow swept over the grass and something sharp tore a gap in the seat of his pants, and made him squeal with fright and pain. But he wriggled in beside Peter Rabbit and was safe, while Mr. Marsh Hawk flew off with a scream of rage and disappointment.

*(Mother West Wind’s Animal Friends, chapter 5, “How Johnny Chuck Ran Away”)*

## STORY 4. February 8, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Gets a Surprise.

Johnny Chuck had never been frightened in all his short life. He made himself as small as possible and crept as far as he could underneath a friendly stone in the old wall. His pants were torn and his legs smarted dreadfully where one of Mr. Marsh Hawk’s cruel, sharp claws had scratched him as he dived after Peter Rabbit into the safe shelter of the hole in the old stone wall. How he did wish that he had minded old Mrs. Chuck and stayed in his own yard as she had told him to.

Peter Rabbit looked at the tear in Johnny Chuck’s pants. “Pooh!” said Peter Rabbit, “don’t mind a little thing like that!”

“But I’m afraid to go home with my pants torn,” said Johnny Chuck.

“Don’t go home.” replied Peter Rabbit. “I don’t unless I feel like it. You stay away

a long time and then your mother will be so glad to see you that she won't ever think of the pants."

Johnny Chuck looked doubtful, but before he could say anything Peter Rabbit stuck his head out to see if the way was clear. It was, and Peter's long legs followed his head. "Come on, Johnny Chuck," he shouted. "I'm going over to the sweet clover patch."

But Johnny Chuck was afraid. He was almost sure that old Mr. Marsh Hawk was waiting just outside to gobble him up. It was a long time before he would put so much as the tip of his wee black nose out. But without Peter Rabbit it grew lonelier and lonelier in under the old stone wall. Besides he was afraid that he would lose Peter Rabbit, and then he would be lost indeed, for he didn't know the way home.

Finally Johnny Chuck ventured to peep out. There was jolly, round, red Mr. Sun smiling down just as if he was used to seeing little runaway Chucks every day. He looked and looked for Peter Rabbit but it was a long time before, and when he did all he saw was Peter Rabbit's funny long ears above the tops of the waving grass, for Peter Rabbit was hidden in the sweet clover patch, eating away for dear life.

It was only a little distance, but Johnny Chuck had had such a fright that he tried three times before he grew brave enough to scurry through the tall grass and join Peter Rabbit. My! How good that sweet clover did taste! Johnny Chuck forgot all about his torn pants. He forgot that he had run away and didn't know the way home. He just ate and ate and ate until his stomach was so full he couldn't stuff another piece of sweet clover into it.

Suddenly Peter Rabbit grabbed him by a sleeve and pulled him down flat.

"Sh-h-h," said Peter Rabbit. Don't move!"

Johnny Chuck's heart almost stopped beating. What new danger could be now? In a minute he heard a queer noise. Peeping between the stems of sweet clover he saw—what do you think? Why, old Mrs. Chuck cutting sweet clover to put in the basket of vegetables she was taking home from Farmer Brown's garden.

Johnny Chuck gave a great sigh of relief, but he kept very still, for he did not want her to find him there after she told him not to put foot outside his own dooryard. "You wait here," whispered Peter Rabbit, and crept off through the clover. Pretty soon Johnny Chuck saw Peter Rabbit steal up behind old Mrs. Chuck and pull four lettuce leaves out of her basket.

*(Mother West Wind's Animal Friends, chapter 5, "How Johnny Chuck Ran Away")*

## STORY 5. February 9, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit's Old House

"I wish I hadn't run away," said Johnny Chuck dolefully as he and Peter Rabbit peeped out from the sweet clover patch and watched old Mrs. Chuck start for home

with her market basket on her arm.

“You ought to think yourself lucky that your mother didn’t find you here in the sweet clover patch. If it hadn’t been for me she would have,” said Peter Rabbit.

Johnny Chuck’s face grew longer and longer. His pants were torn, his leg was stiff and sore where old Mr. Marsh Hawk had scratched him that morning, but worse still, his conscience pricked him. Yes, sir: Johnny Chuck’s conscience was pricking him hard, very hard indeed, because he had run away from home with Peter Rabbit after old Mrs. Chuck had told him not to leave the yard while she was away. Now he didn’t know the way home.

“Peter Rabbit, I want to go home,” said Johnny Chuck suddenly. “Isn’t there a short cut so that I can get home before my mother does?”

“No, there isn’t.” said Peter Rabbit. “And if there was what good would it do you? Old Mrs. Chuck would see that tear in your pants and then you’d catch it!”

“I don’t care. Please won’t you show me the way home, Peter Rabbit?” begged Johnny Chuck.

Peter Rabbit yawned lazily as he replied: “What’s the use of going now? You’ll catch it anyway, so you might as well stay and have all the fun you can. Say, I know a dandy old house up on the hill. Jimmy Skunk used to live there, but no one lives in it now. Let’s go up and see it. It’s a dandy place.”

Now right down in his heart Johnny Chuck knew that he ought to go home, but he couldn’t go unless Peter Rabbit would show him the way, and then he did want to see that old house. Perhaps Peter Rabbit was right (in his heart he knew that he wasn’t) and he’d better have all the fun he could. So Johnny Chuck followed Peter Rabbit up the hill to the old house of Jimmy Skunk.

Cobwebs covered the doorway. Johnny Chuck was going to brush them away, but Peter Rabbit stopped him. “Let’s see if there isn’t a back door,” said he. “Then we can use that, and if Bowser the Hound, or Farmer Brown’s boy come along and find this door they’ll think no one ever lives here anymore, and you’ll be safer than if you were right in your own home.”

So they hunted and hunted, and by, and by Johnny Chuck found the back door, way off at one side and cunningly hidden under a tangle of grass. Inside was a long dark hall and at the end of that a nice big room. It was very dirty and Johnny Chuck, who is very neat, at once began to clean house, and soon had it spick and span. Suddenly they heard a voice outside the front door.

“Doesn’t look as if anybody lives here, but seems as if I smell young rabbit and yes, I’m sure I smell young chuck, too. Guess I’ll have a look inside.”

“It’s old Granny Fox,” whispered Peter Rabbit, trembling with fright.

Then Peter Rabbit did a very brave thing. He remembered that Johnny Chuck could not run very fast, and that if it hadn’t been for him Johnny Chuck would be safe at home. “You stay right here,” whispered Peter Rabbit. Then he slipped out the back

door. Half way down the hill he stopped and shouted:

Old Granny Fox  
Is slower than an ox!

Then he started for the old brier patch as fast as his long legs could take him, and after him ran Granny Fox.

*(Mother West Wind's Animal Friends, Chapter 6, "Peter Rabbit's Run for Life")*

## STORY 6. February 10, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit's Race for Life.

Peter Rabbit was running for his life. There was no doubt about it. Right behind him, grinding her long white teeth and with her eyes snapping, ran old Granny Fox. Peter Rabbit did not like to think what would happen to him if she should catch him.

Peter Rabbit was used to running for his life. He had to do it at least once every day. But usually, he was near a safe hiding place, and he rather enjoyed the excitement. This time, however, the only place of safety he could think of was the friendly old brier patch and that was a long way off.

Back at the old house on the hill where Granny Fox had discovered Peter Rabbit was little Johnny Chuck trembling with fright. He crept to the back door of the old house to watch. He saw Granny Fox getting nearer and nearer to Peter Rabbit.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! She'll catch Peter Rabbit! She'll catch Peter Rabbit!" wailed Johnny Chuck, wringing his hands in despair.

It certainly looked as if Granny Fox would. She was right at Peter Rabbit's heels. Poor happy-go-lucky little Peter Rabbit! Two more jumps and Granny Fox would have him. Johnny Chuck shut his eyes tight for he didn't want to see.

But Peter Rabbit had no intention of being caught so easily. While he had seemed to be running his very hardest, really he was not. And all the time he was watching Granny Fox, for Peter Rabbit's big eyes are so placed that he can see behind him without turning his head. So, he knew when Granny Fox was near enough to catch him in one more jump. Then Peter Rabbit dodged. Yes, sir, Peter Rabbit dodged like a flash, and away he went in another direction, lipperty-lipperty-lip, as fast as he could go.

Old Granny Fox had been so sure that in another minute she would have tender young rabbit for her dinner that she had begun to smile, and her mouth actually watered. She did not see where she was going. All she saw was the white patch on the seat of Peter Rabbit's trousers bobbing up and down right in front of her nose.

When Peter Rabbit dodged something surprising happened. Johnny Chuck, who had opened his eyes to see if all was over, jumped up and shouted for joy and did a funny little dance in the doorway of the old house on the hill. Peter had dodged right in front of a wire fence, a fence with ugly, sharp barbs, and right smack into it ran Granny Fox! It scratched her face and tore her bright red cloak. It threw her back flat on the

Illustrations. February 5 to February 10, 1912.



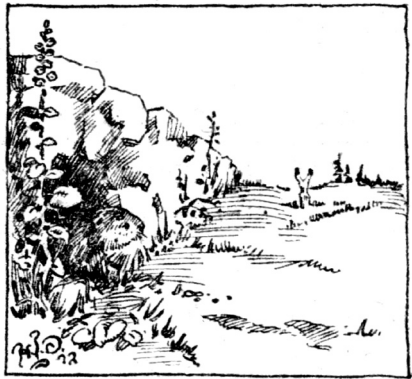
1. Billy Mink Loses a Race



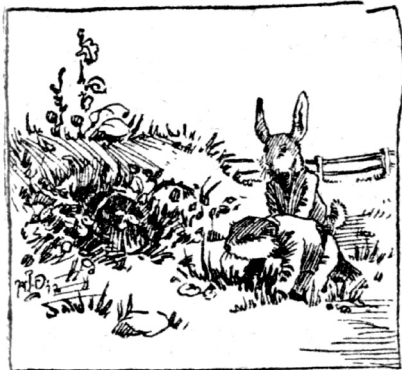
2. Johnny Chuck is Left Alone



3. Johnny Chuck's Narrow Escape



4. Johnny Chuck Gets a Surprise



5. Peter Rabbit's Old House



6. Peter Rabbit's Race for Life



ground with all the wind knocked out of her body.

When finally, she had gotten her breath and scrambled to her feet Peter Rabbit was almost over to the friendly old brier patch. He stopped and sat up very straight. Then he put his hands on his hips and shouted.

“Run, Granny, run!  
Here comes a man who’s got a gun!”

Granny Fox started nervously and looked this way and looked that way. There was no one in sight. Then she shook a fist at Peter Rabbit and started to limp off home.

Johnny Chuck gave a great sigh of relief. “My,” said he, “I wish I was as smart as Peter Rabbit!”

“You will be if you live long enough,” said a voice right behind him. It was old Mr. Toad.

*(Mother West Wind’s Animal Friends, chapter 6, “Peter Rabbit’s Run for Life”)*

## STORY 7. February 12, 1912.

### Mr. Toad Gets a Fright.

Mr. Toad and Johnny Chuck sat in the doorway of the old house on the hill and watched old Granny Fox limp off home. “I wonder what it would seem like not to be afraid of anything in the whole world,” said Johnny Chuck.

“People who mind their own business and don’t get into mischief don’t need to be afraid of anything,” said Mr. Toad.

Johnny Chuck remembered how safe he had always felt at home with old Mrs. Chuck and how many times and how badly he had been frightened since he ran away that morning. “I guess, perhaps you are right, Mr. Toad,” said Johnny Chuck doubtfully.

“Of course, I’m right,” replied Mr. Toad. “Of course, I’m right. Look at me. I attend strictly to my own affairs and no one ever bothers me.”

“That’s because you are so homely that no one wants you for a dinner when they can find anything else,” said Peter Rabbit, who had come up from the friendly old brier patch.

“Better be homely than to need eyes in the back of your head to keep your skin whole,” retorted Mr. Toad. “Now I don’t know what it is to be afraid.”

“Not of old Granny Fox?” asked Johnny Chuck.

“No,” said Mr. Toad.

“Nor Bowser the Hound?”

“No,” said Mr. Toad. “He’s a friend of mine.” Then Mr. Toad swelled himself up very big. “I’m not afraid of anything under the sun,” boasted Mr. Toad.

Peter Rabbit looked at Johnny Chuck and slowly winked one eye. “I guess I’ll go up the hill and have a look around,” said Peter Rabbit, hitching up his trousers. So, Peter Rabbit went off up the hill while Mr. Toad smoothed down his dingy white waistcoat and told Johnny Chuck what a foolish thing fear is.

By and by there was a queer rustling in the grass back of them. Mr. Toad hopped around awkwardly. “What was that?” he whispered.

“Just the wind in the grass, I guess,” said Johnny Chuck.

For a while all was still, and Mr. Toad settled himself comfortably and began to talk once more. “No, sir,” said Mr. Toad, “I’m not afraid of anything.”

Just then there was another rustle in the grass, a little nearer than before. Mr. Toad was certainly nervous. He stretched up on the tip of his toes and looked in the direction of the sound. Then Mr. Toad turned pale. Yes, sir, Mr. Toad turned pale. His big, bulging eyes looked as if they would pop out of his head.

“I—I must be going,” said Mr. Toad, hastily. “I quite forgot an important engagement down on the Green Meadows. If Mr. Blacksnake should happen to call don’t mention that you have seen me, will you, Johnny Chuck?”

Johnny Chuck looked over in the grass. Something long and slim and black was wriggling through it. When he turned about again Mr. Toad was half way down the hill, going with such big hops that three times he fell flat on his face, and when he picked himself up, he didn’t even stop to brush off his clothes.

“I wonder what it seems like not to be afraid of anything in the world?” said a voice right behind Johnny Chuck.

There stood Peter Rabbit laughing so that he had to hold his sides, and in one hand was the end of an old leather strap with which he had fooled Mr. Toad into thinking it was Mr. Blacksnake.

*(Mother West Wind’s Animal Friends, Chapter 6, “Peter Rabbit’s Run for Life”)*

## STORY 8. February 13, 1912.

### Mr. Blacksnake Changes His Clothes.

Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck sat in the doorway of Jimmy Skunk’s deserted old house on the hill and looked down across the green meadows. Every few minutes Peter Rabbit would chuckle as he thought of how he had fooled Mr. Toad into thinking that an old leather strap was Mr. Blacksnake.

“Is Mr. Blacksnake so very dangerous?” asked Johnny Chuck, who had run away from home that morning and had seen very little of the world.

“Not for you or me,” replied Peter Rabbit, “because we’ve grown too big for him to swallow. But he would like nothing better than to catch Mr. Toad for his dinner. But if you ever meet Mr. Blacksnake be polite to him. He is very quick tempered, is Mr. Blacksnake, but if you don’t bother him he’ll not bother you. My goodness. I wonder

what's going on down there in the alders?"

Johnny Chuck looked over to the alder thicket. He saw Sammy Jay, Blacky the Crow and Mrs. Redwing sitting in the alders. They were calling back and forth, apparently very much excited. Peter Rabbit looked this way and that way to see if the coast was clear.

"Come on, Johnny Chuck, let's go down and see what the trouble is," said he, for you know Peter Rabbit has a great deal of curiosity.

So down to the alder thicket skipped Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck as fast as they could go. Half way there they were joined by Danny Meadow Mouse, for he, too, had heard the fuss and wanted to know what it all meant.

"What's the matter?" asked Peter Rabbit of Sammy Jay, but Sammy was too excited to answer and simply pointed down into the middle of the alder thicket. So, the three of them, one behind the other, very softly crept in among the alders. A great commotion was going on among the dead leaves. Danny Meadow Mouse, gave one look then he turned as pale as did Mr. Toad when Peter Rabbit fooled him with the old leather strap. "This is no place for me!" exclaimed Danny Meadow Mouse, and started for home as fast as he could run.

There, partly under an old log, lay Mr. Blacksnake. There seemed to be something the matter with him. He looked sick, and threshed and struggled till he made the leaves fly. Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow and Mrs. Redwing called all sorts of insulting things to him, but he paid no attention to them. Once Mrs. Redwing darted down and pecked him sharply. But Mr. Blacksnake seemed quite helpless.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Johnny Chuck in a whisper.

"Nothing. Wait and you'll see. Sammy Jay and Mrs. Redwing better watch out or they'll be sorry," replied Peter Rabbit.

Just then Mr. Blacksnake wedged his head in under the old log and began to push and wiggle harder than ever. Then—Johnny Chuck gasped. Mr. Blacksnake was crawling out of his clothes! Yes, sir; his old suit was coming off, wrong side out, just like a glove, and underneath he wore a splendid new suit of shiny black.

"It's time for us to be moving," whispered Peter Rabbit. "After Mr. Blacksnake has changed his clothes, he is pretty short-tempered. Just hear him hiss at Mrs. Redwing and Sammy Jay!"

They tip-toed out of the alder thicket and started back for the old house on the hill. Peter Rabbit suddenly giggled out loud. Tomorrow," said Peter Rabbit, "we'll come back and get Mr. Blacksnake's old suit and have some fun with Danny Meadow Mouse."

*(Mother West Wind's Animal Friends, Chapter 7, "A Joker Fooled.")*

## STORY 9. February 14, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit's Joke.

Danny Meadow Mouse sat on his doorstep nodding. He was dreaming that his tail was long, like the tails of all his cousins. One of Old Mother West Wind's Merry Little Breezes stole up and whispered in his ear. Danny Meadow Mouse was awake, wide awake, in an instant. "So, Peter Rabbit is going to play a joke on me and scare me into fits!" said Danny Meadow Mouse.

"Yes," said the Merry Little Breeze, "for I overheard him telling Johnny Chuck all about it."

Danny Meadow Mouse began to laugh softly to himself. "Will you do something for me?" he asked the Merry Little Breeze.

"Sure," replied the Merry Little Breeze.

"Then go find Cresty the Fly-catcher, and tell him that I want to see him," said Danny Meadow Mouse.

The Merry Little Breeze hurried away and pretty soon back he came with Cresty the Fly-catcher.

Now all this time Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck had been very busy planning a joke on Danny Meadow Mouse. They had gone down to the alder thicket where they had seen Mr. Blacksnake change his clothes, and they had found his old suit just as he had left it.

"We'll take this up and stretch it out behind the big tussock of grass near the home of Danny Meadow Mouse," chuckled Peter Rabbit. "Then I'll invite Danny Meadow Mouse to take a walk, and when we come by the tussock of grass he will think he sees Mr. Blacksnake himself all ready to swallow him. Then we'll see some fun!"

So, they carried Mr. Blacksnake's old suit of clothes and hid it behind the big tussock of grass and arranged, it to look as much like Mr. Blacksnake as they could. Then Johnny Chuck went back to the old house on the hill to watch the fun, while Peter Rabbit went to call on Danny Meadow Mouse.

"Good morning, Peter Rabbit," said Danny Meadow Mouse politely.

"Good morning, Danny Meadow Mouse," replied Peter Rabbit. "Don't you want to take a walk with me this fine morning?"

"I'll be delighted to go," said Danny Meadow Mouse, reaching for his hat<sup>3</sup>.

So, they started out to walk, and presently they came to the big tussock of grass.

Peter Rabbit stopped. "Excuse me while I tie up my shoe<sup>4</sup>. You go ahead and I'll join you in a minute," said Peter Rabbit.

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3 Anthropomorphism.

4 Anthropomorphism.

So Danny Meadow Mouse went ahead, and as soon as his back was turned Peter Rabbit clapped both hands over his mouth to keep from laughing, for you see he expected to see Danny Meadow Mouse come flying back in great fright the minute he turned the big tussock and saw Mr. Blacksnake's old suit.

Peter Rabbit waited and waited, but no Danny Meadow Mouse. What did it mean? Peter stopped laughing and peeped around the big tussock. There sat Danny Meadow Mouse with both hands clapped over his mouth, laughing till the tears rolled down his cheeks, and Mr. Blacksnake's old suit was nowhere to be seen.

"He laughs best who laughs last," said Danny Meadow Mouse to himself that afternoon as he sat on his doorstep and chuckled softly.

(*Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*, Chapter 7, "A Joker Fooled.")

## STORY 10. February 15, 1912.

### What Became of Mr. Blacksnake's Old Clothes.

When Danny Meadow Mouse first heard from a Merry Little Breeze that Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck were planning to play a joke on him and scare him into fits with a suit of Mr. Blacksnake's old clothes, he tried very hard to think of some way to turn the joke on the jokers. Then he remembered Cresty the Fly-catcher, and sent for him.

Now Cresty, the Fly-catcher, is a handsome fellow. In fact, he is quite the gentleman, and does not look at all like one who would be interested in any one's old clothes. But he is. He is never satisfied until he has lined the hollow in the old apple tree, which is his home, with the old clothes of Mr. Snake.

So, when Danny Meadow Mouse came for him and whispered in his ear, Cresty the Fly-catcher smiled broadly and winked knowingly. "I certainly will be there, Danny Meadow Mouse; I certainly will be there," said he.

So Cresty the Fly-catcher hid in a tree close by the big tussock of grass behind which Peter Rabbit had planned to place Mr. Blacksnake's old suit so as to scare Danny Meadow Mouse. His eyes sparkled when he saw what a fine, big suit it was. "My, but this will save me a lot of trouble," said he to himself. "It's the finest old suit I've ever seen."

The minute Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck turned their backs, down dropped Cresty the Fly-catcher, picked up Mr. Blacksnake's old clothes, and, taking them with him, once more hid in the tree. Presently back came Peter Rabbit with Danny Meadow Mouse.

Just before they reached the big tussock, Peter Rabbit pretended to have to stop to tie a shoe<sup>5</sup>, while Danny Meadow Mouse went on alone around the big tussock.

Cresty the Fly-catcher nearly dropped his prize, it tickled him so to see Peter Rabbit on one side of the big tussock, laughing fit to kill himself at the scare he thought

5 Anthropomorphism. Passage removed in *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*.

Danny Meadow Mouse would get when he first saw Mr. Blacksnake's old suit, and on the other side of the big tussock Danny Meadow Mouse laughing fit to kill himself over the surprise Peter Rabbit would get when he found that Mr. Blacksnake's old clothes had disappeared.

Pretty soon Peter Rabbit stopped laughing and peeped around the big tussock. There sat Danny Meadow Mouse laughing fit to kill himself, but not a trace of the old suit which was to have given him such a scare. Peter couldn't believe his own eyes, for he had left it there not three minutes before. Of course, it wouldn't do to say anything about it. So, he hurried around the big tussock as if he was merely trying to catch up.

"What are you laughing at Danny Meadow Mouse?" asked Peter Rabbit.

"I was thinking what a joke it would be if we could only find an old suit of Mr. Blacksnake's and fool old Mr. Toad into thinking that it was Mr. Blacksnake himself," replied Danny Meadow Mouse. "What are you looking for Peter Rabbit? Have you lost something?"

"No," said Peter Rabbit. "I thought I heard footsteps, and I was looking to see if it could be Reddy Fox creeping through the grass."

Danny Meadow Mouse stopped laughing. "Excuse me, Peter Rabbit," said he hurriedly. "I've just remembered an important engagement." And off he started for home as fast as he could go.

And to this day Peter Rabbit doesn't know what became of Mr. Blacksnake's old clothes.

*(Mother West Wind's Animal Friends, Chapter 7, "A Joker Fooled.")*

## STORY 11. February 16, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Gets a Message.

It was two days since Johnny Chuck had run away from home. He was beginning to get just a wee bit homesick. Jimmy Skunk's deserted old house on the hill, where he had been living with Peter Rabbit, was very nice and very comfortable for a "play house," but after all there is no place like home.

"Peter Rabbit," said Johnny Chuck, "I want to go home."

"Well, why don't you go?" asked Peter Rabbit with a grin.

"Because I don't know the way. Won't you please take me home?"

Peter Rabbit sat up and looked across the Green Meadows. "I don't believe it's safe today," said Peter Rabbit. "I can see old Whitetail, the Marsh Hawk, sitting on a fence post way down there and I bet he's just looking for young Chuck and Rabbit for his dinner. Tell you what, let's have a good time today, and tomorrow I'll take you home. Let's have a game of leapfrog."

"All right," said Johnny Chuck, "if you'll promise to take me home the first thing

tomorrow morning.”

Peter Rabbit agreed, and led the way to a nice smooth place where they could play. “Now, you give me a back,” said Peter Rabbit.

So Johnny Chuck bent over, put both hands on his knees and gave Peter Rabbit a back. Over sailed Peter Rabbit in a beautiful long jump and landed with a thump. Then a surprising thing happened. Peter Rabbit jumped to his feet, clapped both hands to the seat of his trousers and began the maddest dance ever seen on the Green Meadows, “Oh! oh! oh!” shrieked Peter Rabbit.

Johnny Chuck stood and stared, for he didn’t know what to make of it. Just then he felt a sharp pain on the tip of his funny black nose and then another in the calf of one leg.

“I’ll teach you young rascals not to break in an honest man’s house!” cried a sharp voice right in his ear. It was Mr. Yellow Jacket<sup>6</sup>, the hornet. Peter Rabbit had landed right on the roof of Mr. Yellow Jacket’s house and Mr. Yellow Jacket, who is very quick-tempered, was giving them a taste of the sharp little lance he always carries with him. Johnny Chuck began to dance as madly as Peter Rabbit.

“Serves you right for running away from home,” said a new voice. It was one of Old Mother West Wind’s Merry Little Breezes. “Go put some mud on your nose and then you’ll feel better.”

Johnny Chuck hastened to find some mud, and when he had put it on his wounds the smart ceased, though they were still very sore.

“Now, Johnny Chuck, I’ve got a message for you,” said the Merry Little Breeze. “Old Mrs. Chuck has sent me to tell you that now you are out in the world you can stay, and that you had better build a home for yourself.”

Johnny Chuck sat down in dismay. “Pooh,” said Peter Rabbit, who had just come up with the seat of his trousers plastered with mud, “you’re big enough now to take care of yourself, Johnny Chuck. Tomorrow, I’ll help you find a place to build a new house if this one isn’t good enough.”

*(Bedtime Story Calendar, #16.)*

## STORY 12. February 17, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Decides to Build.

“Well,” said Peter Rabbit, “now that old Mrs. Chuck has turned you out in the world what are you going to do, Johnny Chuck?”

“She didn’t turn me out in the world,” replied Johnny Chuck indignantly. “I ran away from home with you, and you know it!”

Peter Rabbit giggled. “You certainly did run some when old Whitetail, the Marsh Hawk, got after us that morning. And I guess you’ve learned enough to take care of

6 This is counter-factual. Male yellowjackets do not sting.

Illustrations. February 12 to February 17, 1912.



7. Mr. Toad Gets a Fright



8. Mr. Black Snake Changes his Clothes



9. Peter Rabbit's Joke



10. What Became of Mr. Blacksnake's Old Clothes



11. Johnny Chuck Gets a Message



12. Johnny Chuck Decides to Build



yourself since you started out to see the world. If I was you I'd just fix this old house of Jimmy Skunk's and live here. He don't want it any longer and it will save you a lot of work."

Now, Johnny Chuck had learned a lot since he ran away from home. He had learned that a young Chuck must have his eyes wide open if he would escape all the dangers that threaten him, and that as his legs are short he must have a safe retreat. Peter Rabbit can run away from danger, but Johnny Chuck must hide from it.

"Too many know about this old house on the hill," said Johnny Chuck. "I don't believe it's really safe. You know Farmer Brown's boy dropped a big stone over the back door only yesterday. I think I'll build a new house."

Peter Rabbit yawned lazily. "Some folks do like to work," said he. "For my part, I'd rather have a good time. Come on down to the sweet clover patch."

"No," said Johnny Chuck, "I'm going to hunt for a place to build a new house."

"All right," said Peter Rabbit. "Good luck to you even if you are foolish."

Peter Rabbit hopped off in his usual careless, happy-go-lucky fashion and Johnny Chuck washed his face, brushed his clothes and started out to find a place to build his new house.

Pretty soon he met Danny Meadow Mouse. "Where are you going?" asked Danny Meadow Mouse.

"To find a place to build a new house," said Johnny Chuck.

"Be sure it's dry," said Danny Meadow Mouse.

A little farther on he met Jimmy Skunk. "Where are you going?" asked Jimmy Skunk.

"To find a place to build a new house," said Johnny Chuck.

"Be sure it's high," said Jimmy Skunk.

Johnny Chuck went on and pretty soon he met Striped Chipmunk. "Where are you going?" asked Striped Chipmunk.

"To find a place to build a new house," said Johnny Chuck.

"Be sure it's shady," said Striped Chipmunk.

Johnny Chuck went on. He walked and he walked and he walked. By and by he sat down to rest under an old apple tree on the side of a little hill that overlooked the green meadows. It was very beautiful there under that old apple tree. It was dry, it was high, it was shady. "Why, it's just the place I've been looking for!" cried Johnny Chuck. "I'll build my new house here."

And without wasting another minute Johnny Chuck began to dig.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #17)*

## STORY 13. February 19, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Gives Advice

“Good morning. Johnny Chuck.”

Johnny Chuck looked up. Then he stopped digging and wiped his hands on his overalls. “Good morning, Peter Rabbit,” said he.

“What are you doing?” asked Peter.

“Building a new house,” replied Johnny Chuck.

Peter Rabbit grinned. “What’s the use? Why don’t you do as I do, use one of the empty houses someone else has left? There are plenty of them around,” said Peter.

Johnny Chuck shook his head. “Not for me, Peter Rabbit, not for me! Most of these empty houses are dirty and have only one door. I wouldn’t live in a house with only one door.”

“Pooh! You’re a ‘fraid cat!” broke in Peter. “What’s the good of two doors? You can’t use but one at a time. Come on and play.”

Johnny Chuck shook his head. “No,” said he. “Work first and fun afterward. When I get my house done I’ll play all you want to.”

Peter Rabbit laughed and then jumped over his own shadow; at least, he tried to. “You’re foolish, Johnny Chuck; you’re foolish,” he said. “This is too fine a day to work.”

Johnny Chuck began to dig once more and made the sand fly to make up for lost time. Peter stretched out in the sun and yawned lazily while he watched Johnny. Peter Rabbit is lazy and shiftless. Yes, sir; Peter certainly is shiftless. By and by Johnny Chuck stopped to get his breath. Peter looked so comfortable that Johnny was tempted—very much tempted—to stretch out beside him. But the new house was a long way from being finished, so he just sat down on the door-step for a few minutes.

“Peter,” said he, “what would you do if Bowser the Hound should come along?”

Peter laughed. “I’d lose him in the briar patch,” said he.

“But suppose you couldn’t lose him in the briar patch?”

“Then I would just slip into that old house of Jimmy Skunk’s up on the hill,” replied Peter.

“But the backdoor has got a stone over it. I know, for I have been up there,” said Johnny.

“What difference does that make?” asked Peter. “Bowser the Hound can’t get in the front door, because it is too small.”

“You take my advice and build a house with two doors. You never can tell what

may happen,” replied Johnny Chuck, once more making the sand fly.

“Pooh! I’m not afraid of Bowser the Hound,” boasted Peter. “I wish he’d come along just for some excitement.”

“Bow-wow-wow,” roared a great voice right behind Peter.

Peter didn’t stop to look around or to say “Good-bye,” but started for the briar patch as fast as his long legs could take him, and right at his heels was Bowser the Hound.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar, #18)*

## STORY 14. February 20, 1912.

### **Peter Rabbit Wishes He Had Heeded Johnny Chuck.**

Peter Rabbit plunged into the briar patch and dodged this way and dodged that way, trying to lose Bowser the Hound. But twist and turn and jump as he would, he couldn’t fool Bowser the Hound. The friendly briars tried to help Peter. They caught Bowser’s tender ears and tore and scratched him until he yelped, but always he kept his nose in the tracks of Peter Rabbit, and where Peter went Bowser followed.

Peter Rabbit began to be worried. He had boasted bravely to Johnny Chuck, but right down in his heart he was very much afraid of Bowser the Hound, and now that he found he couldn’t lose Bowser in the briar patch he began to think very hard.

Where could he go for safety? There was Jimmy Skunk’s old house on the hill. It was a long way off and he must cross the open meadow, with no friendly briars to hold back Bowser the Hound. Peter peeped out from the briar patch and wondered if he could get there before Bowser could catch him. Already he was tired and a little out of breath.

First, he would puzzle Bowser all he could. So, Peter ran around in circles and jumped this way and jumped that way to mix his tracks all up so that it would take Bowser the Hound a long time to untangle them. Then Peter started for the Lone Little Path up the hill to Jimmy Skunk’s old house.

Johnny Chuck, peeping from the door of his own snug new house saw Peter Rabbit’s white tail disappear in the broken-down doorway of Jimmy Skunk’s old house and he gave a sigh of relief, for he is very fond of happy-go-lucky, shiftless Peter Rabbit. He would have felt better still, however, if he had not remembered that a big stone closed the back door of Jimmy Skunk’s old house.

Late that afternoon Johnny Chuck sat on his doorstep when up limped Peter Rabbit. Such a looking sight as Peter was! His clothes were torn and full of burrs and yellow sand. His feet were so sore that he could hardly walk. Peter dropped down on the ground and panted.

“Oh,” groaned Peter, “I’ve had such a narrow escape!”

“Tell me about it,” said Johnny Chuck.

Peter hesitated and looked a little confused. "Bowser the Hound tried to dig me out of Jimmy Skunk's old house on the hill," said he.

"And what did you do?" asked Johnny Chuck.

"I tried to get out the back door," said Peter, "and then I remembered the big stone you had told me about. So, I had to dig a new back door. Oh, dear, my hands are so sore! Anyhow, Bowser the Hound dug a big hole for nothing, for all he got was three hairs out of my tail."

Johnny Chuck looked at the funny little bunch of cotton Peter calls a tail and whistled. "My, but that was a narrow escape!" said he, "Peter Rabbit, you take my advice and build a house with two doors."

Just then someone cried "Thief! thief!" It was Sammy Jay.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar, #19)*

## STORY 15. February 21, 1912.

### Why Sammy Jay Cries Thief

"Thief! Thief! Thief!"

Johnny Chuck and Peter Rabbit looked up in the old apple tree. There sat a very fine gentleman. He wore a blue coat with white trimmings and a smart cap, which sat on his head very jauntily. But every time he opened his mouth to speak, he cried "Thief." It was Sammy Jay.

Johnny Chuck had never before seen him so close at hand. "Oh, my, my, what a handsome fellow!" he claimed admiringly.

Sammy Jay heard and began to strut proudly and show off his fine clothes.

"Handsome is as handsome does," replied Peter Rabbit. "You heard what he said."

"Yes," said Johnny Chuck, "I heard, but who was he calling a thief?"

Peter Rabbit turned and stared at Johnny Chuck, "My, you are innocent!" said he. "He's the thief himself, the worst thief in the Green Forest or on the Green Meadows. If you've got anything you really want to keep don't let Sammy Jay see it.

"But what does he tell everybody that he is a thief for?" asked Johnny Chuck.

"He has to; old Mother Nature makes him. Guess he can't help stealing, for it runs in the family. His father was a thief and his grandfather was a thief, and his great-grandfathers, way back to the days when the world was young, were thieves."

Just then Sammy Jay flew away, crying, "Thief," at the top of his lungs. Peter Rabbit grinned. "Wonder what mischief he's off on now. If there's any trouble anywhere in these parts and Sammy Jay isn't at the bottom of it, it's because he was asleep," said Peter Rabbit.

“But how did old Mother Nature happen to make him tell everyone what he is?” asked Johnny Chuck.

Peter Rabbit yawned. “It’s a long story,” said he. “Some day you go down to the Smiling Pool and ask Grandfather Frog to tell you all about it. He knows. It all happened way back in the days when the world was young. Sammy Jay’s grandfather a thousand times removed wore just such a handsome suit as Sammy does, and everyone thought him a very fine gentleman. He had the sweetest voice on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest, and he was very proud of it. But all the time old Mr. Jay was pretending to be such a fine gentleman he was stealing from his neighbors. Yes, sir, old Mr. Jay was stealing right and left, so Grandfather Frog says.

“It made a terrible fuss. No one knew who the thief was and no one suspected handsome Mr. Jay. Finally old Mother Nature came to see what all the trouble meant. It took her just about two minutes to find out who the thief was, for you can’t fool old Mother Nature, and it’s of no use to try. She called everybody together and then asked old Mr. Jay to sing. He opened his mouth, but all he could do was shriek “Thief! Thief! Thief!” Then everyone knew who the thief was. And ever since the jays have had to tell the world what they are.

“Hello! What’s the matter with Happy Jack Squirrel?”

(Significantly expanded in *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*, Chapter 6)

## STORY 16. February 22, 1912.

### Happy Jack Squirrel Suffers a Loss.

Something was wrong with Happy Jack Squirrel. There was no doubt about it, something was wrong with Happy Jack—very wrong indeed. He was racing up and down the old hollow chestnut tree, now in it, now out, now running round and round it, and all the time scolding as fast as his tongue could go. His voice grew angrier and angrier, and then all at once he sat down in his doorway, buried his face in his hands and began to cry.

“Boo, hoo, hoo!” sobbed Happy Jack Squirrel.

Just then along came Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, who is own cousin Happy Jack, the Gray Squirrel. Chatterer is a mischief maker. He likes to see other people in trouble. As soon as he saw Happy Jack sitting in his doorway crying, he put his hands on his hips, ran out his tongue at Happy Jack and called shrilly:

“Cry-baby Cripsey!  
His mammy’s name is Dipsey!”

Happy Jack stopped crying. “I’m not a cry-baby!” he shouted. “I bet you’d cry if someone had stolen all the nuts you had been hiding away all winter!”<sup>7</sup>

Chatterer grinned. He does not love his cousin, Happy Jack, and it tickled him immensely to think that someone had stolen Happy Jack’s nuts. Happy Jack saw that

7 An error. Gray squirrels, unlike red squirrels, do not store their food in a single cache.

grin. He glared at Chatterer, then he said slowly: "I believe that you know where my nuts are."

"Perhaps I do and perhaps I don't," said Chatterer, provokingly.

"You're a thief!" cried Happy Jack.

"I'm not!"

"You are!"

"I'm not!"

"You are!"

There they were, facing each other, one in a gray suit and the other in red, both so angry that they danced up and down. It wasn't pretty to see nor nice to hear.

Suddenly Happy Jack sprang at Chatterer. "I'll teach you to steal my nuts!" he cried.

Now Happy Jack is twice as big as his cousin, Chatterer, and the latter had no idea of fighting. So, he raced out on the very tip of a branch of the old chestnut and made a flying leap over into the next tree, and after him ran Happy Jack, crying "Stop thief! Stop thief!" at the top of his lungs. My, but that was an exciting race through the treetops! But Happy Jack couldn't catch his nimble cousin, who, just to tease him, kept always just out of reach. Finally, they stopped to rest in the old apple tree under which sat Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck.

"What's all this fuss about?" asked Peter Rabbit.

"He stole my nuts," said Happy Jack, pointing at Chatterer.

"No such thing," sputtered Chatterer.

Peter Rabbit turned to Johnny Chuck and winked one eye. Then he held up a warning hand. "Listen," said he. 'Way off in the Green Forest they heard a voice crying: "Thief, thief, thief!" It was Sammy Jay.

Happy Jack understood then who had stolen his nuts. He held out his hand to Chatterer. "I take it all back," he said.

Chatterer grinned. "What will you give me if I'll find your nuts for you?" he asked.

"Half," replied Happy Jack.

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 5, "Happy Jack Squirrel's Stolen Nuts.")*

## STORY 17. February 23, 1912.

### Chatterer Makes a Call

Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, brushed his coat and combed his hair and put on his

finest white waistcoat. Then he took his cane<sup>8</sup> and started along the Lone Little Path that twists and winds through the Green Forest. Presently he met Bobby Coon.

“Good morning, Bobby Coon,” said Chatterer, with his very best bow.

Bobby Coon looked at Chatterer with grave suspicion. When Chatterer is polite you may be pretty sure that he has some favor to ask.

“Morning,” growled Bobby Coon.

Chatterer pretended not to notice Bobby Coon’s grumpy manner. “They tell me that you are a great traveller and have seen much of the world, Bobby Coon,” said he. “It must be fine to have seen so much. I quite envy you your knowledge.”

Now Bobby Coon felt greatly flattered to hear Chatterer say this. He swelled himself out in a very important manner and cleared his throat. “Yes,” he boasted, “there isn’t much in the Green Forest or on the Green Meadows that I don’t know about. I know where everybody lives and—”

“Oh, Bobby Coon, it can’t be that you know where everybody lives! That really can’t be, for some folks are so very clever in hiding their homes,” said Chatterer, pretending to be very doubtful.

“Pooh!” said Bobby Coon disdainfully. “There is no one so clever that he can hide his home from me!”

“Not even Sammy Jay?” asked Chatterer, with an air of great doubt.

“Ho! ho! ho!” laughed Bobby Coon. “Why Sammy Jay lives in the little spruce tree that stands half way down the hill between the Crooked Little Path and the Great Pine.”

This was all that Chatterer wanted to know, so he bade Bobby Coon goodbye and started on his way. As soon as Bobby Coon was out of sight Chatterer hurried over to the young spruce half way down the hill, and, sure enough, there was Sammy Jay’s home. Chatterer grinned—an unpleasant grin. “I think I’ll make a call,” said he.

In a flash he was up the tree. He had forgotten all his politeness now, for without so much as knocking he popped his head over the edge of Sammy Jay’s nest and frightened Mrs. Jay so that she flew off screaming at the top of her lungs. But in a few minutes, she was back, for she had left four beautiful eggs and she knew that Chatterer is very fond of eggs.

“They are very nice eggs,” said Chatterer.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Jay, fearful of what he might say next.

“I’m very hungry,” said Chatterer. Mrs. Jay fell to wringing her hands<sup>9</sup>.

“Of course, I’d rather have nuts, but I think that these will make me a very good

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8 Anthropomorphism.

9 Anthropomorphism. Removed in *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*. Replaced with “fell to weeping.”

dinner. Nuts are very scarce at this time of year.”

Mrs. Jay stopped wringing her hands<sup>10</sup>. “Will you leave my eggs alone if I’ll bring you some nuts?” she asked.

Chatterer agreed, and Mrs. Jay hurried off with her basket on her arm<sup>11</sup>. As soon as her back was turned Chatterer stole after her. “Now,” said he, “I shall find out where Happy Jack’s stolen nuts are.”

(*Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*, Chapter 5, “Happy Jack Squirrel’s Stolen Nuts.”)

## STORY 18. February 24, 1912.

### The Nut Race.

Chatterer the Red Squirrel peeped from behind a big gray birch. His eyes shone. He was so excited that he could hardly keep his claws from rattling on the bark. Up in Blacky the Crow’s old nest Mrs. Jay was very busy, very busy indeed. Every few minutes she would look all around to see if anyone was watching. She did not see Chatterer, and he chuckled to himself as he watched her. Pretty soon she put something in her basket and flew toward home.

Chatterer chuckled right out loud. Then like a flash he climbed the big pine to the old nest of Blacky the Crow and there he found—what do you think? Why, all Happy Jack Squirrel’s store of nuts, which had been stolen by Sammy Jay. Chatterer’s eyes glistened. His cousin, Happy Jack, had promised him half if he would find and return them. Now he had found them and half were his. But why not more than half? Who would know if he did not divide fairly? Just as Mrs. Jay had done. Chatterer looked all around. No one was in sight.

Chatterer began to work very fast. Out of the bottom of the nest he pulled a lot of sticks until pretty soon down dropped a nut and then another, and another, and another. By and by the last nut had dropped down to the ground. Chatterer scampered down and gathered them up into three piles. Yes, sir, there were three piles instead of two. When the last nut had been picked up he took all that were in one pile and hid them in a hollow log lying near. Then he hurried to find his cousin, Happy Jack and show him the two piles of nuts.

Now, Happy Jack does not love his cousin, Chatterer, but he was so tickled to get even part of his store of nuts back that he gladly stuck to his bargain, and gave Chatterer first choice of the two piles.

“Oh, dear, how will we ever get all these nuts over to my hollow chestnut tree?” wailed Happy Jack. You see it was a long way over to the hollow chestnut tree, and Happy Jack could carry but two nuts at a time.

Chatterer winked one of his small, bright eyes. Then he whispered in one of Happy Jack’s ears and Happy Jack was so tickled that he shouted aloud.

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10 Anthropomorphism. Replaced with “weeping” in *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*.

11 Anthropomorphism. Omitted in *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*.



Illustrations. February 19 to February 24, 1912.



13. Johnny Chuck Gives Advice



14. Peter Rabbit Wishes He Had Heeded Johnny Chuck



15. Why Sammy Jay Cries Thief



16. Happy Jack Squirrel Suffers a Loss



17. Chatterer Makes a Call

Off the two started, one all red, and one all in gray, to the edge of the Green Meadows. There they found the Merry Little Breezes and soon had them racing over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest with invitations to a nut race that afternoon.

Of course, no one would miss such a jolly affair as that, and early in the afternoon all the little meadow people and all the little forest folk had gathered by the two piles of nuts. That is, all were there but Sammy Jay. You see, Sammy's conscience troubled him, for you remember that he was the thief who stole the nuts in the first place.

When all were ready Chatterer gave the word to start, and then everyone took as many nuts as he could carry and hurried over to Happy Jack's storehouse. Back and forth they scurried. Even Spotty the Turtle entered the race, although he moves so slowly that it took him all the afternoon to carry one nut.

When Happy Jack's pile had disappeared they took Chatterer's over to his storehouse. And all the time Chatterer pretended to be very busy himself, but really wasn't doing a thing. It was very exciting, very exciting, indeed. And who do you think won? Why, Peter Rabbit, because his legs are long and meant for hurrying.

When the last one had gone Chatterer brushed his clothes, and then with a crafty smile he stole over to the hollow log where he had hidden the third pile of nuts. He was thinking of how smart he had been. It didn't trouble him a bit that he had been dishonest. He peeped into the hollow log and then he rubbed his eyes. The nuts were not there!<sup>12</sup>

(*Mother West Wind's Neighbors*, Chapter 5, "Happy Jack Squirrel's Stolen Nuts.")

## STORY 19. February 26, 1912.

### Billy Mink upsets Grandfather Frog

Grandfather Frog sat on his big, green lily-pad dreaming. Up the Big Rock in the middle of the Smiling Pool crept Billy Mink and peeped over the edge. Splash! Billy Mink had dived into the Smiling Pool close to where Grandfather Frog sat nodding. A big ripple circled out and rocked the green lily-pad so that Grandfather Frog nearly lost his balance.

"Chug-a-rum!" exclaimed Grandfather Frog. "Billy Mink, you should have something better to do than to annoy honest folk. When I was young—"

The big green lily-pad was suddenly lifted into the air and Grandfather Frog landed flat on his back in the Smiling Pool.

"What about when you was young?" called Billy Mink as he swam away from the big green lily pad which he had upset.

"Young people had some respect for their elders," retorted Grandfather Frog,

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<sup>12</sup> This story is concluded in *Mother West Wind's Neighbors*, with Striped Chipmunk the culprit. It is unknown why this story did not appear in newspapers. It is possible that it is a missing story.

climbing back on the lily-pad and smoothing down his white and yellow waist-coat.

Billy Mink climbed up on the Big Rock and beckoned to Little Joe Otter, who had just come down the Laughing Brook, and to Jerry Muskrat, who was sitting on the end of an old log. They climbed up beside Billy Mink and there were three little scamps in brown bathing suits on top of the Big Rock.

“Grandfather Frog was just telling me that he is a famous diver,” said Billy Mink, his eyes twinkling with mischief.

“Chug-a-rum! No such thing!” said Grandfather Frog. “I was saying that—”

“And that we don’t know the first thing about high diving,” continued Billy Mink, just as if Grandfather Frog had not spoken.

Grandfather Frog swelled with indignation. “Billy Mink,” said he, “you ought to be ashamed of yourself! I was saying that—”

“So I thought perhaps he would show us how,” continued Billy Mink, nudging Little Joe Otter with his elbow.

“Splendid!” cried Little Joe Otter. “Shall we help you to climb up on the Big Rock?”

Grandfather Frog looked up at the three little brown faces grinning down at him.

“You—you—you graceless young scamp, Billy Mink,” sputtered Grandfather Frog. “You know very well that I said nothing about diving, though for that matter, old as I am I could show you—”

“What?” broke in Jerry Muskrat.

“That he’s forgotten all about the art of diving,” said Billy Mink before Grandfather Frog could reply. “Now let’s show him how it is done: one, two three!”

Splash! The three scamps struck the water together, and the big wave they made overturned the green lily-pad.

“When I was young,” said Grandfather Frog to no one in particular, as he swam to a quiet place in the bullrushes, “we were taught to show respect to our elders, but now—” Grandfather Frog shook his head sadly as he watched three little scamps in brown bathing suits climb out on the Big Rock.

## STORY 20. February 27, 1912.

### The Slippery Slide.

On the Big Rock in the middle of the Smiling Pool lay Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat. They had been swimming and fishing and playing all sorts of tricks on each other. Now they were stretched out at full length, while jolly, round, red Mr. Sun dried their brown bathing suits.

What can we do now?” asked Billy Mink slapping at a bothersome fly.

“Rest,” said Jerry Muskrat, yawning lazily.

“Did you fellows ever go down a slippery slide?” asked Little Joe Otter stretching his short legs.

“No,” replied Billy Mink. “Is it fun?”

“Greatest fun in the world,” replied Little Joe Otter. “I say, let’s build one right now!”

“Too much like work; let’s take a nap first,” said Jerry Muskrat, sleepily.

“Oh, come on, lazy bones!” cried Billy Mink, slyly reaching over and giving Jerry Muskrat a sudden push.

Now Jerry had been lying very close to the edge of the Big Rock, and over he went, splash! right into the Smiling Pool. Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter dived after him, and then all three raced across to where the bank is steepest on the edge of the Smiling Pool.

There Little Joe Otter picked out a place for the slippery slide. Jerry Muskrat dug up mud from the edge of the water and Billy Mink pretended to help lay it on the slippery slide. But like a great many other people, Billy Mink prefers to watch others work and can make a great pretense of doing nothing. However, Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat worked steadily, and by noon the slippery slide was finished.

Little Joe Otter was the first to try it. Stretched flat on his stomach, he shot down the slippery slide head first into the water. A minute later his little brown head bobbed up out in the middle of the Smiling Pool.

“It’s great! Come on and try it!” cried Little Joe Otter.

Billy Mink went next and after him Jerry Muskrat. It was their first experience with a slippery slide, and they thought it was the greatest fun they had ever had.

As fast as they could climb up the steep bank the three little brown scamps hurried to the top of the slippery slide and shot down again, sometimes on their stomachs, sometimes on their backs, sometimes head first, sometimes feet first, and sometimes two together. They laughed and they shouted and they splashed in the Smiling Pool until the Merry Little Breezes and all the little meadow people came hurrying over to see the fun. Even Grandfather Frog forgot his dislike of Billy Mink and swam across to look on.

Finally, Jerry Muskrat induced Grandfather Frog to try the slippery slide. Every one shouted to see him sprawled out flat on his white and yellow waist-coat, shooting head first down into the Smiling Pool. When he came up he was smiling the full width of his big mouth.

“When I was young,” began Grandfather Frog—

“Oh, come on, be young now, Grandfather Frog! Try it again!” shouted Little Joe Otter.

And Grandfather Frog did.

## STORY 21. February 28, 1912.

### Billy Mink Plays a Joke

In spite of his insatiable curiosity, which you know is the reason he has such long ears, Peter Rabbit was one of the last to hear of little Joe Otter's slippery slide. When he did he started for the Smiling Pond as fast as his long legs could take him. Long before he got there he could hear the shouting and the splashing.

Johnny Chuck was the first to see him coming. "Here comes Peter Rabbit," cried Johnny Chuck.

"Hurrah! We'll get Peter to try the slippery slide!" shouted Billy Mink. In a minute Peter joined the crowd around the Smiling Pond.

"Hello, Peter Rabbit!" cried Little Joe Otter from the top of the slippery slide.

"Hello!" replied Peter, puffing hard, for he was out of breath from his long run.

"Come try the slippery slide," invited Little Joe Otter.

Peter Rabbit shook his head. Peter likes to have a share in all fun, but he does not like the water. So, though he just ached to try the slippery slide, the splash at the bottom of it was too much for him.

One after the other, Little Joe Otter, Billy Mink, Jerry Muskrat and Grandfather Frog slid down the slippery slide into the Smiling Pond. Even Spotty the Turtle climbed the steep bank and for once in his life he moved fast, as, with legs waving wildly, he slid head first into the Smiling Pond.

Peter Rabbit kept edging nearer and nearer to the slippery slide. He was so interested that he did not notice how close he was getting. Finally, he stood right at the top of the slippery slide. Billy Mink winked at Little Joe Otter. Then very softly he crept around behind Peter, who was standing with his hands on his knees leaning forward to look down into the Smiling Pool. Billy Mink gave Peter a sudden push. Over went Peter head first down the slippery slide. He grabbed wildly at the sides of the slide. With his long legs he kicked frantically. It was of no use at all; he couldn't save himself.

Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter, Jerry Muskrat, Johnny Chuck, and all the other little meadow people shouted and slapped each other on the back and rolled over and over in the grass, Peter Rabbit looked so funny going down the slippery slide.

Splash! Peter landed in the Smiling Pool. His mouth was wide open and he swallowed so much water that it strangled him. Peter can swim a little, but he was so surprised that he almost forgot how. He choked and gasped and floundered about until even Billy Mink began to get a little frightened. Jerry Muskrat, who is one of the best hearted little fellows in the world, swam out to help Peter ashore. Little Joe Otter helped pull him ashore, and the Merry Little Breezes dried his clothes.

Then everybody watched Billy Mink turn a double somersault down the slippery slide.

## STORY 22. February 29, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Gets Even

Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink sat on the Big Rock in the middle of the Smiling Pool planning mischief. Over on the end of an old log sat Jerry Muskrat eating his breakfast of nice sweet freshwater clams. He was back to the Big Rock and he had not seen the two little scamps in grown bathing suits sitting there.

Very quietly Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink slid down the Big Rock into the water. Then each took a long breath and disappeared under water. Still Jerry Muskrat did not see them. He sat on the end of his log and his tail hung straight down in the water. The clams were good and Jerry felt very happy and contented.

Suddenly his tail was pulled so hard that he lost his balance. Over he went backward with a great splash into the Smiling Pool. He came up spluttering and blowing and looked this way and that way. Everything seemed just as usual. Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily-pod dreaming of the days when the world was young. Over on the Green Meadow the Merry Little Breezes were playing tag. It was perplexing, very perplexing indeed.

Jerry climbed back on the old log, and this time took care to tuck his tail under him. Then he made a discovery. All his nice sweet freshwater clams were gone. Look as he would he could not find them anywhere. Jerry began to suspect a joke. He settled himself comfortably and pretended to go to sleep, but all the time his bright little eyes were watching every part of the Smiling Pool.

Now Peter Rabbit had been sitting behind a tall clump of grass on the edge of the bank and had seen everything that went on. When Billy Mink had pulled Jerry Muskrat's tail he had dived down and then swam under water to join Little Joe Otter, who had been hiding Jerry's clams. The two scamps hid in the bullrushes on the far side of the Smiling Pool. Peeping over the bank, Peter Rabbit could see the two little brown heads just beneath him, and could hear them chuckling as they watched Jerry Muskrat. Suddenly Peter had an idea. Now was the chance to get even for the trick Billy Mink had played him at the slippery slide.

Close to the edge of the bank was a big stone. Peter got behind it and pushed. It didn't move. Peter braced himself and pushed harder. This time the stone rolled so suddenly that Peter fell flat on his face and nearly followed it into the Smiling Pool.

Splash! fell the big stone right between Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink. It frightened them so that they sprang clear out of the water and then scrambled through the bullrushes as fast as they could.

Of course, Jerry Muskrat heard the splash and saw the fright of the two little scamps. Then he knew who had pulled his tail and stolen his clams. Little Joe Otter and

Billy Mink looked up to see where the big stone had come from. They saw Peter Rabbit grinning down at them. They began to grin too though they looked very sheepish.

“Now we’re even, Billy Mink,” shouted Peter.

Billy admitted that they were even. Then he and Little Joe Otter showed Jerry Muskrat where they had hidden his clams and all three swam over to the Big Rock to play.

## STORY 23. March 1, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Gets a Bath.

Reddy Fox turned a somersault. Then he brushed off his trousers and started down the Lone Little Path to the Green Meadows. Pretty soon he met Bobby Coon looking very contented and sleepy.

“Hello, Bobby Coon, where have you been all night?” asked Reddy.

“Fishin’,” replied Bobby with a yawn.

“Get any?” asked Reddy.

“Lots of ‘em,” said Bobby, smacking his lips.

Bobby Coon went on to his home in the hollow chestnut tree and Reddy sat down to think. Mother Fox had warned him to keep away from the Laughing Brook and the Smiling Pool, but the more he thought of the fish Bobby Coon had caught the more he wanted to go fishing. He looked all about, but no one was watching. Quickly he slipped through the tall meadow grass toward the Smiling Pool.

There he crept out on an old log and lay down flat where he could look into the water. There almost within reach were a dozen little trout. Reddy’s eyes sparkled and his mouth watered. One of the little trout swam up almost within reach. Like a flash one of Reddy’s black paws shot into the water. But the little trout just flirted some water in Reddy’s face and swam off. Then another little trout did the same thing. They were just teasing Reddy. The more they teased the more excited Reddy became. He forgot that he was on a slippery log. He forgot that he had been forbidden to go to the Smiling Pool.

Now Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter had been fishing that morning and each had a fine string of trout, for you know they are famous fishermen. They had seen Reddy creep out on the log and now they were tickling and laughing behind the Big Rock to see how excited Reddy was getting.

Suddenly Billy Mink had an idea. He swam ashore and crept through the bulrushes until he was close to the log where Reddy was fishing. So quietly that he didn’t make even a ripple, Billy Mink swam back of the old log. Then taking a long breath he dived under it and waited. The next time Reddy’s little black paw came into the water Billy grabbed it and pulled. Of course, Reddy lost his balance and landed flat on his back in the Smiling Pool.

Such a splashing and floundering and choking and coughing! And such a looking

sight as Reddy Fox was as he crawled up the bank! His red coat dripped muddy water. Masses of mud clung to his pants. And for all his trouble Reddy hadn't a single fish. He was badly frightened, too, for he didn't know what had pulled him in.

But as he slunk away through the grass, he heard something that made him stop and grind his teeth.

"Ha ha ha!" That was Billy Mink.

"Ho! ho! Ho!" That was Little Joe Otter.

"He he he!" That was Grandfather Frog.

Reddy Fox began to suspect the cause of his sudden bath.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar, #30)*

## STORY 24. March 2, 1912.

### Grandfather Frog Gains Wisdom

Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily-pad dreaming of the days when the world was young. His hands were clasped across his white and yellow waistcoat and he looked the picture of contentment. Presently, out of the corner of one eye, he caught a glimpse of something moving. It wasn't a foolish green fly, for it was red. What could it be? Grandfather Frog changed his position so that he could see better.

Just then he heard Jerry Muskrat slap the water with his tail, which is Jerry's way of signaling danger. Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter, sitting on the big rock, heard it, too, and didn't wait to ask questions. They slid into the water and out of sight on the instant. But Grandfather Frog was too much interested in the queer thing which had caught his attention to heed Jerry's warning. The thing was very curious, very curious indeed, and it was red, a very bright red.

Now Grandfather Frog is old, and he is accounted very wise, but even age and wisdom are sometimes foolish. So it was with Grandfather Frog. Red is a color he detests<sup>13</sup>. It makes him angry. Here was this strange thing which might or might not be a fly. It annoyed him.

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog, springing at it with his mouth wide open. But just as his big mouth closed with a snap the queer thing was snatched away by one of Old Mother West Wind's merry little breezes. Grandfather Frog landed with a splash in the smiling pool.

Now the most foolish thing in the world is for wisdom to lose its temper. And this is just what happened in the smiling pool. Yes, sir, Grandfather Frog lost his temper. As fast as he could climb out on the green lily-pads he leaped for that queer red thing which might or might not be a fly. The Merry Little Breezes had all that they could do to snatch it away each time. In vain they whispered "Danger! Danger!" in Grandfather Frog's ear. In vain Jerry Muskrat slapped the water with his tail.

13 This is incorrect. Frogs actually have difficulty perceiving red things.



Illustrations. February 26 to March 2, 1912.



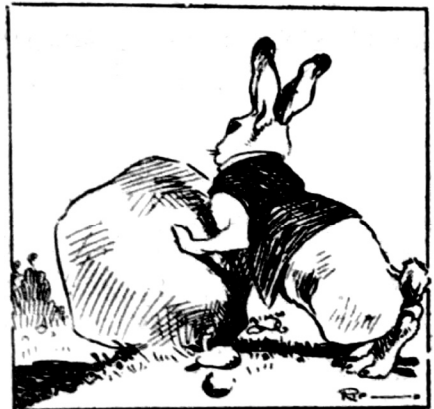
19. Billy Mink Upsets Grandfather Frog



20. The Slippery Slide



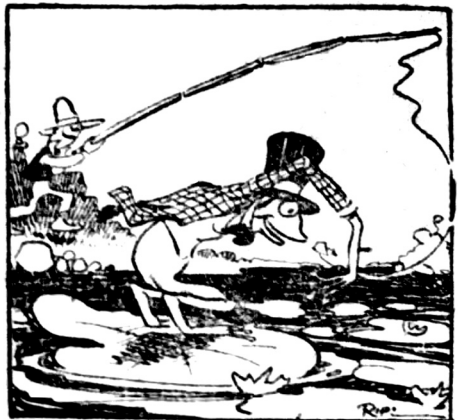
21. Billy Mink Plays a Joke



22. Peter Rabbit Gets Even



23. Reddy Fox Gets a Bath



24. Grandfather Frog Gains Wisdom

Finally, Grandfather Frog had to stop for breath. Cautiously Jerry Muskrat swam under the lily-pad on which Grandfather Frog was resting, and reaching over, poked him in the back.

“Look out for Farmer Brown’s boy,” whispered Jerry.

For the first time Grandfather Frog looked. Sure enough, there was Farmer Brown’s freckled-face boy reaching out with a long pole from which dangled a string. On the end of the string was a hook and a bit of red flannel.

“Chug-a-rum!” exclaimed Grandfather Frog and dived under the lily-pads, while the Merry Little Breezes danced happily over the Green Meadows to visit Johnny Chuck.

And since that day Grandfather Frog has been wiser than ever, and this is one reason why he is very fond of the Merry Little Breezes.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar, #33)*

## STORY 25. March 4, 1912.

### A Busy Day at the Smiling Pool

Everybody was excited. Yes, sir, everybody in the Smiling Pool and along the Laughing Brook was just bubbling over with excitement. Even Spotty the Turtle, who usually takes everything so calmly that some people think him stupid, climbed up on the highest point of an old log where he could see what was going on.

Only Grandfather Frog, sitting on his big green lily-pad and watching for foolish green flies for his breakfast, appeared not to know that something unusual was going on. Really, he was just as much excited as the rest, but because he is very old and accounted very, very wise, it would not do for him to show it.

What was it all about? Why all the Minks and the Coons and the Otters and the Muskrats, who live and play around the Smiling Pool and the Laughing Brook, were hunting for traps. Yes, sir, they were hunting for traps set by Farmer Brown’s boy, just as Grandfather Frog had advised them to.

Jerry Muskrat and Little Joe Otter were hunting together. They were swimming along close to shore just where the Laughing Brook leaves the Smiling Pool when Jerry wrinkled up his funny little nose and stopped swimming. Sniff, sniff, sniff, went Jerry Muskrat. Then little cold shivers ran down his backbone and way out to the tip of his tail.

“What is it?” asked Little Joe Otter.

“It’s the man-smell,” whispered Jerry.

Just then Little Joe Otter gave a long sniff. “My, I smell fish!” he cried, his eyes sparkling, and starting in the direction from which the smell came. He swam faster than Jerry and in minute he shouted in delight:

“Hi, Jerry! Someone’s left a fish right on the edge of the bank. What a feast!”

Jerry hurried as fast as he could swim, his eyes popping out with fright, for the nearer he got the stronger grew that dreadful man-smell. “Don’t touch it,” he panted. “Don’t touch it, Joe Otter!”

Little Joe laughed. “What’s the matter, Jerry? ‘Fraid I’ll eat it all up before you get here?” he asked as he reached out for the fish.

“Stop!” shrieked Jerry, and gave Little Joe a push just as the latter touched the fish.

Snap! A pair of wicked steel jaws flew together and caught Little Joe Otter by a claw of one toe. If it hadn’t been for Jerry’s push, he would have been caught by a foot.

“Oh! oh! oh!” cried Little Joe Otter.

“Next time I guess you’ll remember what Grandfather Frog said about watching out when you find things to eat where they never were before,” said Jerry, as he helped Little Joe pull himself free from the trap. But he left the claw behind and had a dreadfully sore toe as a result. Then they buried the trap deep down in the mud and started to look for another.

All around the Smiling Pool and along the Laughing Brook their cousins, and uncles, and aunts, and friends were just as busy, and every once in a while, someone would have just as narrow an escape as Little Joe Otter. And all the time up at the farm house Farmer Brown’s boy was planning what he would do with the skins of the little animals he was sure he would catch in his traps.<sup>14</sup>

*(The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat, chapter 5)*

## STORY 26. March 5, 1912.

### Farmer Brown’s Boy is Puzzled

Farmer Brown’s boy was whistling merrily as he tramped down across the Green Meadows. The Merry Little Breezes saw him coming, and they raced over to the Smiling Pool to tell Billy Mink. Farmer Brown’s boy was going to visit his traps. He was very sure that he would find Billy Mink or Little Joe Otter or Jerry Muskrat, or perhaps Bobby Coon.

Billy Mink was sitting on top of the Big Rock. He saw the Merry Little Breezes racing across the Green Meadows and behind them he saw Farmer Brown’s boy. Billy Mink dived head first into the Smiling Pool. Then he swam over to Jerry Muskrat’s house and warned Jerry. Together they hunted up Little Joe Otter, and then the three little scamps in brown hid in the bulrushes, where they could watch Farmer Brown’s boy.

The first place Farmer Brown’s boy visited was Jerry Muskrat’s old log. Very

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<sup>14</sup> In *The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat*, this story is more properly set up. It is possible that stories 83 to 86 (May 15 to 18, 1912) were originally supposed to be run before this one. This would also help to explain the four story gap.

cautiously he peeped over the edge of the bank. The trap was gone!

“Hurrah!” shouted Farmer Brown’s boy. He was very much excited as he caught hold of the end of the chain, which fastened it to the old log. He was sure that at last he had caught Jerry Muskrat. When he pulled the trap up it was empty. Between the jaws were a few hairs and a little bit of skin, which Jerry Muskrat had left there when he sprung the trap with his tail.

Farmer Brown’s boy was disappointed. “Well, I’ll get him tomorrow, anyway,” said he to himself. Then he went on to his next trap; it was nowhere to be seen. When he pulled the chain he was so excited that he trembled. The trap did not come up at once. He pulled and pulled and then suddenly up it came all covered with mud. In it was one little claw from Little Joe Otter. Very carefully Farmer Brown’s boy set the trap again. If he could have looked over in the bulrushes and have seen Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink and Jerry Muskrat watching him and tickling and laughing, he would not have been so sure that next time he would catch Little Joe Otter.

All around the Smiling Pool and then up and down the Laughing Brook Farmer Brown’s boy tramped, and each trap he found sprung and buried in the mud. He had stopped whistling by this time and there was a puzzled frown on his freckled face. What did it mean? Could some other boy have found all his traps and played a trick by springing all of them? The more he thought about it, the more puzzled he became. You see, he did not know anything about the busy day the Minks and the Otters and the Muskrats and the Coons had spent the day before.

Old Grandfather Frog, sitting on his big green lily-pad, smoothed down his white and yellow waistcoat and winked up at jolly, round, red Mr. Sun as Farmer Brown’s boy tramped off across the Green Meadows.

“Chugarum,” said Grandfather Frog, as he snapped up a foolish green fly. “Much good it will do you to set those traps again!”

Then Grandfather Frog called to Billy Mink and sent him to tell all the other little people of the Smiling Pool and the Laughing Brook that they must hurry and spring all the traps again as they had before.

This time it was easy, because they knew just where the traps were, so all day long they dropped sticks and stones into the traps once more and sprung them. Then they prepared for a grand feast of the good things to eat which Farmer Brown’s boy had left scattered around the traps.

*(The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat, Chapter 6)*

## STORY 27. March 6, 1912.

### The Feast at the Big Rock

Old Mother West Wind had gathered her children, the Merry Little Breezes, into her big bag and carried them to their home behind the Purple Hills. Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had put his nightcap on. Black shadows were creeping out across the Smiling

Pool, and across them every few minutes would pass a little line of silver. It was the ripple made by a Mink or an Otter or a Muskrat swimming over to the Big Rock.

The traps are sprung and hid away,  
Now let us merry be.  
We've worked full hard, so let us play, |  
And every care and trouble free.

It was Bobby Coon coming down the bank of the Laughing Brook on his way to the feast at the Big Rock.

Pretty soon they were all there—Jerry Muskrat and all his relations, Little Joe Otter and all relations, Billy Mink and all his relations, and Bobby Coon and all his relations. Everyone brought something to the feast. And what do you think it was? Why, all the good things to eat which Farmer Brown's boy had put around his traps! There were carrots and apples for the Muskrats, and fish for the Otters and Minks and Coons, enough for everyone, and to spare.

Billy Mink stood on his head for joy. Bobby Coon declared it was the best feast he had ever had. Everyone talked at once and stuffed and stuffed until they couldn't stuff another bit. Then all that was left they piled up on the Big Rock, and it was agreed that Bobby Coon should hide it away for the next day.

"Now, let's have a dance," cried Billy Mink.

Everyone rushed pell-mell to the banks of the Smiling Pool, and then began the merriest, maddest dance that ever was seen. Old Grandfather Coon danced with Little Joe Otter's Grandmother. Slim Mr. Mink and Stout Mrs. Muskrat waltzed<sup>15</sup> together in the most stately manner. Billy Mink stepped on the tail of Jerry Muskrat's mother, who is usually very quick-tempered, but she just tucked her tail under her arm and laughed.

And all the time they were so busy having a good time a black shadow was sailing over the green meadows. No one saw it, and no one heard it, for it made not the tiniest sound. When it reached the Big Rock it stopped. There was no one there, for everyone was dancing.

By and by the black shadow drifted away and not so much as a crumb of the good things left there was to be seen. The Big Rock was as bare as when Farmer Brown's boy had seen it that morning.

Just as the day was breaking, the dancers started for their homes. Bobby Coon went first to the Big Rock to get the remains of the feast and hide it away. He rubbed his eyes and called Billy Mink. Billy Mink rubbed his eyes and called Bobby Coon, and all the time, over in a big pine in the Green Forest, Hooty the Owl was sleepily chuckling to himself, for his stomach was very, very full. Can you guess why?

(Reprinted as single story booklet by John H. Eggers in 1944.)

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15 Anthropomorphism.

## STORY 28. March 11, 1912.

### Hooty the Owl in Trouble

“Caw, caw, caw!” That was Blacky the Crow. His cousin, Sammy Jay, heard him, and straightaway started for the Big Hemlock, on the top of which Blacky the Crow was sitting. On the way he stopped to tell all his relatives to come along as quickly as they could, so as not to miss the fun.

“What is Blacky the Crow making such a fuss about?” asked Johnny Chuck.

“He’s found Hooty the Owl asleep and we’re going to have some fun,” replied Sammy Jay.

“That’s a shame,” said Johnny Chuck, indignantly, “you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Sammy Jay.”

Sammy just stuck his tongue out at Johnny Chuck, flirted some dust off his blue and white coat tails, and hurried on. By the time he reached the Big Hemlock, all the crows of the Green Forest were there, and such a racket as they were making! Of course, they had waked up Hooty the Owl, and he was very cross, as people who are waked out of a sound sleep are apt to be. He sat with his back against the tree, and he puffed his feathers out until he looked twice as big as he really is.

Hooty is a coward!  
Hooty is a thief!  
If Hooty comes to my house,  
He’ll surely come to grief!

shouted Blacky, slipping up behind and pulling Hooty’s coat tails. Hooty snapped his bill and hissed fiercely. But he couldn’t see very well in the day time<sup>16</sup>, and so Blacky had no difficulty, in keeping out of his way.

“Wait till it’s dark, Blacky the Crow. You wait till it’s dark!” snapped Hooty the Owl.

Blacky stopped teasing for a minute and shivered just a bit under his black coat. He knew how fierce Hooty is when he can see, and, to tell the truth, he really had rather not meet him after dark. Just then Sammy Jay flew almost into Hooty’s face and cried:

Hooty is a blind man!  
Hooty can’t see me  
Who’s afraid of Hooty?  
Hooty cannot see.

Blacky forgot all his fears and once more led the tormentors of Hooty.

Now, Hooty was not only sleepy and half blind in the bright light, but his stomach was so full of the good things that he had stolen from the feast at the Big Rock the night before that he could hardly move. So, he just snapped and hissed and scolded,

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16 This is counter-factual. Great horned owls can see well in the daylight.

keeping his back against the tree until the Crows and the Jays grew tired of their fun and one by one, with a final jeer, flew away, Hooty the Owl settled himself to sleep again.

“Wait, just you wait,” he muttered darkly.

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 4)*

## STORY 29. March 12, 1912.

### Hooty the Owl has His Fun

“Good-night, Hooty,” cried one of the Merry Little Breezes, hurrying through the Green Forest.

“Good-night,” grumbled Hooty the Owl, and blinked his big, round eyes. Then he blinked them again and shook out his feathers and yawned.

“Don’t see what everybody goes to bed just at the best part of the day for,” said Hooty to himself, for you know Hooty the Owl sleeps when the sun shines and flies abroad when the shadows creep out from the Purple Hills.

Way over on the other side of the Green Forest Blacky the Crow croaked sleepily as he tucked his head under his wing. Blacky was very tired, for he had a very, very busy day. He had pulled up a whole row of Farmer Brown’s young corn. He had had a whole hour of fun tormenting Hooty the Owl when the latter was so sleepy and blinded by sunlight that he could do nothing but hiss and snap his bill. It had been great fun for Blacky and for his cousin, Sammy Jay. Blacky chuckled as he thought of it. Then he closed his eyes and in two minutes was fast asleep.

Now, someone else heard that chuckle and chuckled in reply, but very softly. It was Hooty the Owl. His big yellow eyes grew bigger and brighter as he flew over the big pine where Blacky was sleeping. No one but Hooty could have seen the black rascal in his snug retreat. But Hooty saw, for his eyes are made for seeing in the dark.

Back and forth, as lightly as a feather, and as silently, Hooty sailed over the big pine until he was sure that Blacky was sound asleep. Then something happened. Oh, my, yes, something certainly did happen! Blacky the Crow was knocked off his perch and fell half way to the ground before he could catch himself.

“C-a-a-w, c-a-a-w, c-a-a-w!” screamed Blacky in great fright. “Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What was that?” he cried.

Blacky fluttered back to his perch, bumping his head as he went, for it was so dark he couldn’t see. Hardly had he comfortably settled himself once more and begun to doze then off he went just as before. He was so frightened that he didn’t know what to do; but, just as before, he fluttered back up to his perch. Not the tiniest sound was to be heard. Blacky first turned his head this way and turned his head that way, and watched and listened and shivered and shook, but not a thing could he hear; and yet, just as soon as he closed his eyes, something brushed him off his perch and tumbled him down.

At first, he had thought that he had had a bad dream, but now he realized that some mysterious thing was coming out of the darkness and tormenting him. After a while he heard a voice from the top of the next tree. It was a very deep voice.

“How do you like it, Blacky?” asked the voice.

At first Blacky didn’t recognize it. Then all of a sudden it came to him that this was Hooty the Owl, and that Hooty the Owl was having his revenge for the teasing which Blacky had given him that morning.

When Hooty had grown tired of teasing Blacky the Crow he fluttered back and forth, back and forth, through the Green Forest until he found Sammy Jay. Then Hooty tormented Sammy Jay just as he had Blacky the Crow, until he had frightened him most to death. And just as the first faint light of morning came stealing across the green meadows Hooty the Owl flew to the thickest part of the Green Forest to settle down for the day.

“My, but I have had a good time,” said Hooty the Owl, with a chuckle.

*(Mother West Wind’s Neighbors, Chapter 4)*

## STORY 30. March 13, 1912.

### Blacky the Crow Gets in Trouble

Blacky the Crow awoke early in the morning and he was very, very cross. He had had a dreadful night, for Hooty the Owl had given him no peace at all. He looked very much as he felt, and everyone on the Green Meadows knew that Blacky the Crow was out of sorts.

Breakfast was hard to find that morning, and this made Blacky crosser still. His temper was so short that none of the little people on the Green Meadows dared speak to him. Finally, he met Johnny Chuck coming up the Lone Little Path.

“Good morning,” said Johnny Chuck. Blacky just croaked grumpily.

“I’ve just come from Farmer Brown’s cornfield, and his corn is coming up beautifully,” said Johnny Chuck.

Blacky the Crow began to smile. “That’s the best news I’ve heard for a long time,” said Blacky. Then he shook out his coat, spread his wings, and sailed swiftly over toward the cornfield. Just before he reached it, he met Jimmy Skunk. Jimmy was poking along slowly, looking for beetles for his breakfast.

“Hello, Blacky,” said Jimmy Skunk. “Where are you going?”

“It’s none of your business,” replied Blacky, for he was still out of sorts.

“That’s all right,” replied Jimmy Skunk. “I just wanted to remark that there is danger over in the cornfield.”

“Pooh!” exclaimed Blacky. “I guess I don’t need any warning from you, Jimmy Skunk. I am smart enough to take care of myself. When I need your advice, I will ask



you for it.”

Jimmy Skunk chuckled to himself, for Jimmy seldom loses his temper. Then he stopped looking for beetles and ambled over to a secret hiding place behind the fence, where he could see all that happened in the cornfield.

Now, Blacky the Crow pretended not to care for Jimmy Skunk’s advice, but Blacky is very crafty—very, very crafty, indeed. First, he flew over the cornfield. Everything looked safe. Then he came down and sat for a long time on a fence post watching to see if anything would happen. The longer he watched the emptier his stomach seemed.

He could see the tender, young corn just coming up through the brown earth.

“Jimmy Skunk doesn’t know what he’s talking about,” said Blacky to himself, and then he spread his black wings and sailed over to the greenest spot in the field. My, how good that corn did taste! In five minutes Blacky had forgotten all about danger and was just pulling corn and stuffing himself as fast as ever he could.

Suddenly he felt something clutching at his feet. He tried to take a step and couldn’t. What could the matter be? He tugged and fluttered and pulled, but it was no use. Blacky the Crow had been caught in a snare. And over in the fence corner Jimmy Skunk was rolling over and over and holding on to his sides as he watched Blacky the Crow, for Jimmy was tickled almost to pieces to think that the wise bird of the Green Meadows had been so easily fooled.

## STORY 31. March 14, 1912.

### Jimmy Skunk Proves a good fellow.

Jimmy Skunk laughed and laughed and laughed until his sides were sore. Johnny Chuck, sitting in his doorway under the apple tree, saw Jimmy Skunk rolling over and over in the fence corner by Farmer Brown’s cornfield and he became so curious that he finally hitched up his trousers and started down the Lone Little Path to find out what it all meant.

“Hi, Jimmy Skunk, what are you laughing at?” shouted Johnny Chuck. Jimmy Skunk stopped laughing long enough to beckon to Johnny Chuck to come over in the fence corner.

“Look over there in the cornfield,” said Jimmy Skunk, rubbing his sides, they were sore from laughing.

Johnny Chuck looked. What do you think he saw? Why, there was Blacky the Crow flopping about helplessly and squalling at the top of his voice, for Blacky was caught in a snare and he was too frightened to think. Johnny Chuck grinned, for Blacky the Crow is not loved by the little people of the Green Meadows. He is such a practical joker and such a tormentor that all the others are delighted to see him in trouble. So, Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk just sat and laughed. Then suddenly Johnny Chuck remembered something. He stopped laughing.

“Jimmy Skunk!” he exclaimed, “Farmer Brown’s boy is coming down with a gun. I saw him from my doorway.”

“What do we care?” replied Jimmy Skunk. “We’ll just hide in my old house over yonder, and he will never know anything about it.”

“Well, what about Blacky?” asked Johnny Chuck.

Jimmy Skunk grew very sober. “It certainly would serve him right if Farmer Brown’s boy should find him there,” said he. “But Blacky isn’t such a bad fellow after all. We must do something to help him.”

“I don’t dare to go out there in the middle of that field,” said Johnny Chuck, “for it is such a long way from home and I am afraid that Bowser the Hound would catch me.”

“I am not afraid of Bowser the Hound,” said Jimmy Skunk, “for Bowser doesn’t like my little bag of scent. You stay here and watch and I’ll go see what I can do for Blacky.”

So Jimmy Skunk for once in his life hurried. As fast as he could he ran over to where Blacky was still flopping about helplessly. Blacky was caught in a noose.

“Farmer Brown’s boy is coming with a gun,” said Jimmy Skunk, and grinned maliciously as he saw the fright grow in Blacky’s eyes.

“Oh, dear, oh, dear, what shall I do?” cried Blacky in distress.

“If I were you, I would fly away,” said Jimmy.

“I can’t, I can’t,” sobbed Blacky.

“Just try and see,” said Jimmy Skunk.

Blacky spread his wings, and sure enough he was free, but a long string dangled from one of his feet. Jimmy Skunk had bitten it off close to the stake to which it was tied.

## STORY 32. March 15, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Fools Jimmy Skunk

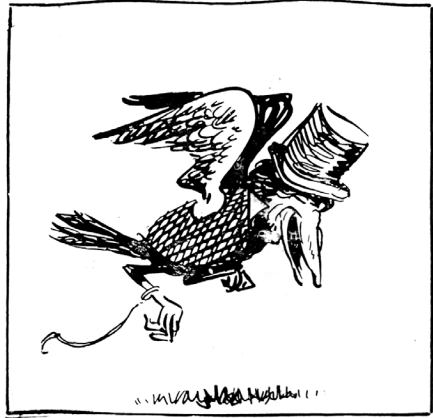
Peter Rabbit came hopping and skipping down the Lone Little Path. Peter was feeling very fine that morning, very fine, indeed. Every few minutes he jumped up in the air and kicked his heels together just for fun. Presently he met Jimmy Skunk. Jimmy was on his way back from Farmer Brown’s cornfield, where he had been to help Blacky, the Crow, to get free from a snare. Jimmy was still tickling and laughing over the way Blacky the Crow had been caught. He had to tell Peter Rabbit all about it. Peter thought it just as good a joke as did Jimmy, and the two trotted along side by side, planning how they would spread the news all over the Green Meadows that Blacky the Crow, who thinks himself so smart, had been caught.

“That reminds me,” said Jimmy Skunk, suddenly, “I haven’t had my breakfast yet. Have you seen any beetles this morning. Peter Rabbit?”

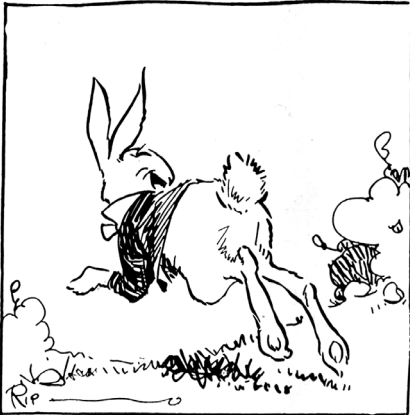
Illustrations. March 4 to March 16, 1912.



25. A Busy Day at the Smiling Pool



31. Jimmy Skunk Proves a Good Fellow



32. Peter Rabbit Fools Jimmy Skunk



33. Reddy Fox Gets into Trouble

Peter Rabbit stopped and scratched his long left ear with his long left hind foot.

“It seems to me that, now you speak of it, I did,” said Peter Rabbit.

“Where?” asked Jimmy Skunk, eagerly.

Peter pretended to think very hard.

“It seems to me that it was back at the top of the Crooked Little Path up the hill,” said Peter.

“I think I will go look for them at once,” replied Jimmy.

“All right,” replied Peter, “I’ll show you the way.”

So up the Crooked Little Path hopped Peter Rabbit, and right behind him trotted Jimmy Skunk. Presently they came to an old pine stump.

Peter Rabbit stopped. He put one hand on his hips.

“Hush,” whispered Peter. “I think there is a whole family of beetles on the other side of the stump. You creep round on the other side and I’ll creep round on this side. When I thump the ground, you spring right around and grab them before they can run away.”

So, Jimmy Skunk crept around one side of the stump and Peter Rabbit crept around on the other side. Suddenly Peter thumped the ground hard twice. Jimmy Skunk was waiting and all ready to spring. When he heard that thump he just sprang as quickly as he could. What do you think happened? Why Jimmy Skunk landed thump right on Reddy Fox, who was taking a sun nap on the other side of the pine stump.

“Ha, ha, ha,” shouted Peter Rabbit, and started down the Crooked Little Path as fast as his long legs could take him.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 4)*

## Story 33. March 16, 1912.

### Reddy Fox gets into Trouble

Reddy Fox was curled up in the sun behind a big pine stump fast asleep. He was dreaming of a coop full of chickens where there was no Bowser the Hound to watch over them. Suddenly something landed on him with a thump that knocked all the wind out of his body. For an instant it frightened Reddy so that he just shook and shook, until he could get his senses together, then he discovered that it was Jimmy Skunk who had sprung upon him.

Jimmy was very polite. He begged Reddy’s pardon. He protested that it was all a mistake. He explained, how Peter Rabbit had played a trick upon both of them and how he himself was just looking for beetles for breakfast.

Now, Reddy Fox is very quick tempered, and as soon as he realized that he had been made the victim of a joke he lost his temper completely. He glared at Jimmy

Skunk. He was so angry that he stuttered.

“Y-y-you, y-y-y-you, y-y-y-you, did that on p-p-purpose,” said Reddy Fox.

“No such thing,” declared Jimmy Skunk. “I tell you it was a joke on the part of Peter Rabbit, and if you don’t believe me, just look down there on the Green Meadows.”

Reddy Fox looked. There sat Peter Rabbit, his hands on his hips, the long ears pointed straight up to the blue sky, and his mouth wide open as he laughed at the results of his jokes. Reddy shook his fist.

“Ha, ha, ha,” shouted Peter Rabbit.

Reddy Fox looked once at Jimmy Skunk, but like all the other little meadow and forest people he has a very great respect for Jimmy Skunk, and though he would have liked to quarrel with Jimmy, he thought it wisest not to. Instead, he started after Peter Rabbit as fast as his legs could go.

Now, Reddy Fox can run very fast, and when Peter saw him coming Peter knew that he would have to use his own long legs to the very best of his ability. Away they went across the Green Meadows, Jimmy Skunk, sitting up on top of the hill, could see the white patch on the seat of Peter Rabbit’s trousers bobbing this way and that way, and right behind him was Reddy Fox. Now, Peter Rabbit could run fast enough to keep away from Reddy for a while. You remember that Peter’s eyes are so placed that he can see behind him without turning his head, so he knew when Reddy was getting dangerously near.

In and out among the bushes along the edge of the Green Meadows they dodged, and the more he had to run, the angrier Reddy Fox grew. He paid no attention to where they were going, but his whole thought was of catching Peter Rabbit.

Now, when Peter began to grow tired, he began to work over toward Farmer Brown’s cornfield, where he knew that Farmer Brown’s boy was hiding with Bowser the Hound. Dodging this way and that, Peter worked over to the fence corner, where Jimmy Skunk had watched Blacky the Crow get caught in a snare. He let Reddy almost catch him, then he dodged out into the open cornfield and Reddy, of course, followed him.

“Bow-wow, bow-wow-wow!”

Reddy did not need to turn to know what had happened. Bowser the Hound had seen him and was after him. Peter just ducked behind a big bunch of grass and sat down to get his breath, while Reddy started off as hard as he could go, with Bowser the Hound behind him.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 5)*

## STORY 34. March 18, 1912.

### The Quick Wit of Reddy Fox

Reddy Fox had forgotten all his anger because of the joke Peter Rabbit had played upon him. Anger had given way to fear, for Reddy knew that he would have to run his fastest to keep away from Bowser the Hound. Many times, he had watched old Mother Fox with Bowser on her trail. Old Mother Fox really seemed to enjoy a good run with Bowser the Hound, for when she grew tired she always found some way to fool Bowser and lose him. But Reddy was not yet sure enough of his ability to fool wise old Bowser, and so whenever he heard the great, deep voice of the hound behind him cold shivers ran down his spine.

Away across the Green Meadows and up the hill through the Green Forest raced Reddy at the top of his speed. Behind him, with his nose to the ground, came the big hound, baying at the top of his lungs. Reddy ran along the old stone wall and jumped as far out into the field as he could.

“I guess that will fool him for a while,” panted Reddy, as he sat down to get his breath.

When Bowser came to the place where Reddy had jumped on the stone wall, he just grinned.

“That’s too old a trick to fool me one minute,” said Bowser to himself, and he made a big circle so that in a few minutes he had found Reddy’s trail again.

Every trick that Reddy had heard his mother tell about he tried in order to fool Bowser the Hound, but it was of no use at all. Bowser seemed to know exactly what Reddy was doing, and wasted no time.

Reddy was beginning to get worried.

He was getting dreadfully out of breath. His legs ached. His big plummy tail, of which he is very, very proud, had become dreadfully heavy. Mother Fox had warned him never, never to run into the snug house they had dug unless he was obliged to save his life, for that would tell Bowser the Hound where they lived, and then they would have to move.

How Reddy did wish that wise old Mother Fox would come to his relief! Reddy was running along the back of Farmer Brown’s pasture, and he could hear Bowser the Hound altogether too near for comfort. Looking this way and that way for a chance for escape, Reddy saw just ahead of him a lot of woolly friends. They were Farmer Brown’s sheep. Reddy had a sudden idea. Like a flash he sprang on the back of one of the sheep<sup>17</sup>. It frightened the sheep as badly as Reddy had been frightened when Jimmy Skunk had landed on him that morning.

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<sup>17</sup> This use of a sheep’s back by a fox trying to escape from a dog can be found in *Wild Animals I have Known* by Ernest Thompson Seton (1898) and in *Red Fox* by Charles G. D. Roberts. (1905).

“Baa, baa, baa,” cried the sheep, and started to run. Reddy hung on tightly, and away they raced across the pasture.

Now, Bowser the Hound trusts wholly to his nose to follow a fox or a rabbit or his master. He did not see Reddy jump on the back of the sheep, so, of course, when he reached the place where Reddy had found his strange horse he was puzzled. Round and round and round and round Bowser worked in a circle, but no trace of Reddy could he find. And all the time Reddy sat behind the stone wall on the far side of the pasture, getting his wind and laughing at the smart way in which he had fooled Bowser the Hound.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 6)*

## STORY 35. March 19, 1912.

### The Digging Match.

Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun looked down from the blue sky and smiled more broadly than ever at what he saw on the Green Meadows. There was great excitement there. All the little people who lived on the Great Meadows or around the Smiling Pool or in the Green Forest were there. Danny Meadow Mouse, Little Joe Otter, Billy Mink, Jerry Muskrat, Grandfather Frog. Spotty the Turtle, Happy Jack Squirrel, Old Mr. Toad, Striped Chipmunk, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, Bobby Coon, Jimmy Skunk, Sammy Jay, Blacky the Crow, Reddy Fox and Johnny Chuck were all on hand.

Reddy Fox had been boasting. He is very fond of boasting, and he likes to have people think that he is a little smarter than anybody else. He had been telling of how fast he could run, of how he had fooled Bowser the Hound, of what wonderful jumps he could make. Now all the little meadow people are rather afraid of Reddy Fox, so, while they laughed quietly behind his back, no one dared to openly contradict it, until suddenly Johnny Chuck said

“Pooh, you are not so much, Reddy Fox. You may be able to run, but you can’t catch me.”

Reddy turned and glared at Johnny. Johnny was sitting right in front of an old house dug long ago by Grandfather Chuck.

“No,” repeated Johnny Chuck, “you can’t catch me, Reddy Fox.”

Reddy’s eyes snapped. Like a flash he sprang at Johnny, but Johnny wasn’t there. He had disappeared in the old house of Grandfather Chuck. The door was too small for Reddy to enter, but Reddy had lost his temper, and he straightway began to dig. Now, when Johnny Chuck heard Reddy Fox begin to dig, he started for the back door, and then, to his dismay, discovered that someone had put a stone over it. There was nothing to do but to dig his way out, making a new door. Behind him he could hear Reddy Fox making the sand fly. So straightway Johnny began to make the sand fly, too, and sent it back straight into the face of Reddy Fox.

That was the most exciting digging match the Green Meadows had ever seen,

for when Reddy Fox tries to dig he certainly is hard to beat. But Johnny Chuck is a natural born digger, and he knew this time that, with Reddy's anger growing with every minute, it would fare hard with him if he was caught.

All the little people gathered around and watched with eyes popping out with excitement. Suddenly right out of the solid earth popped Johnny Chuck. He had dug his way up and made a new door. He was a little out of breath, but his eyes were twinkling as he scampered over to the front door to wait. Presently Reddy Fox appeared, struggling out of the new door that Johnny Chuck had made. Reddy was out of breath. There was sand in his eyes and his nose and in his ears, and his beautiful red coat was all soiled and full of sand. All the little meadow people backed off to a safe distance, and then they sent up a great shout and began to make fun of Reddy Fox. For just a minute Reddy glared at them, then he started off home with his tail dragging behind him.

And all the little meadow people proclaimed Johnny Chuck the champion digger of the Green Meadows.

(Reprinted as single-story booklet by John H. Eggers.)

## STORY 36. March 20, 1912.

### Old Mr. Toad Changes his Suit

Striped Chipmunk, running along the old stone wall on the edge of the Green Meadows, stopped suddenly. Then very softly he tiptoed away until he was sure that he would not be heard. Then he ran as fast as his short legs would take him over to Johnny Chuck's house.

"Hello!" said Johnny Chuck, "what are you in such a hurry about this morning, Striped Chipmunk?"

Striped Chipmunk whispered something to Johnny Chuck and then started off again with Johnny Chuck at his heels. In a few minutes they met Peter Rabbit.

"Hello," exclaimed Peter Rabbit, "what are you fellows in such a hurry about?"

Striped Chipmunk stood on tiptoe and whispered in one of Peter Rabbit's long ears. Then off he started once more with Johnny Chuck behind him, and behind Johnny Chuck, Peter Rabbit hurried, with his big eyes wide open from curiosity and excitement. The three, running as fast as they could, almost knocked Jimmy Skunk over.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Jimmy. Skunk. "Whatever is the matter to make you hurry so?"

Striped Chipmunk whispered to Jimmy Skunk, and then started off again toward the old stone wall. Behind him Johnny Chuck puffed and wheezed, for Johnny Chuck is very fat and running is hard work. Behind Johnny Chuck hopped Peter Rabbit, and



after Peter Rabbit ambled Jimmy Skunk, who, you know, never hurries.

When they reached the place where Striped Chipmunk had stopped so suddenly, he held up a warning hand. Then he led the way on tiptoe to an old log hidden behind some bushes. Very cautiously Striped Chipmunk, Johnny Chuck, Peter Rabbit, and Jimmy Skunk peeped over the old log. What do you think they saw? Why it was old Mr. Toad changing his clothes.

It wasn't very polite to peep, but, as Striped Chipmunk said, they just had to. Under his old suit old Mr. Toad wore a brand-new one, but he was having a terrible time getting the old one off.

Reaching over behind, old Mr. Toad got hold of the back of his coat, and then he tugged and pulled, and pulled and tugged, trying to pull it over his head. It was a tight fit, that old suit of Mr. Toad's, and it had stuck half way. He puffed and grumbled and tugged and pulled. Of course, he didn't know that any one was watching him, and he quite lost his temper.

"Let's go and help him," whispered Striped Chipmunk.

"I don't believe he would thank us," whispered Johnny Chuck.

So, the four little rascals just sat and laughed and tickled to watch poor old Mr. Toad struggling out of his old clothes. The more he struggled the more they laughed. Finally, with a last desperate tug, off came the suit, wrong side out.

"I wonder what he'll do with it now," whispered Peter Rabbit, who, you know, is very curious.

## STORY 37. March 21, 1912.

### What Mr. Toad did with His Old Suit

Old Mr. Toad looked very fine in his new suit. Of course, it was very sober colored, because Mr. Toad wears sober colors only. But it was, nevertheless, very bright and clean and good to look at. Peter Rabbit, peeping over the old log behind which he was hiding, could hold his curiosity in no longer.

"Good morning, Old Mr. Toad," said Peter Rabbit. "You are looking very fine this morning. I see you have a new suit."

Old Mr. Toad rolled his big eyes round at Peter Rabbit.

"What if I have?" he asked crossly, for he was still tired from his struggle to get out of his old suit.

"Nothing; oh, nothing at all," replied Peter Rabbit, "only I would like to know what you do with your old suit. I have never seen your old clothes lying around anywhere."

"Hump!" replied old Mr. Toad, "I take care of my old clothes."

"But what do you do with them?" whispered Peter Rabbit.

“That is my business,” replied Mr. Toad. You notice, Peter Rabbit, that I don’t leave them in rags all over the green meadows.”

Peter grinned a little foolishly, while Striped Chipmunk and Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk laughed uproariously, for they had many and many a time found bits of Peter Rabbit’s old clothes hanging to the bushes and clinging to the edge of the old briar patch.

Old Mr. Toad settled himself comfortably, with his old clothes lying on the ground in front of him. Peter Rabbit and his three little companions watched until they grew tired, but Mr. Toad seemed to be taking a nap.

“I don’t believe he does anything with his old clothes,” said Jimmy Skunk. “Come on and help me find some beetles.” You think too much of your stomach, Jimmy Skunk,” said Johnny Chuck. “Let’s go down to the Smiling Pool and ask Grandfather Frog what Mr. Toad does with his old clothes. He’ll know.”

So off they started for the Smiling Pool. No sooner were their backs turned than old Mr. Toad awoke from the nap he had seemed to be taking. He scrambled up on the old log to make sure that his visitors had departed. Then he hurried down to his old suit. And what do you think he did? Why, he began with the trousers and swallowed all his old clothes, and to this day Peter Rabbit, Striped Chipmunk, Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk still wonder what old Mr. Toad does with his castoff suits, for, though Grandfather Frog knows, he wouldn’t tell.

(Reprinted as single-story booklet by Samuel Lowe Co.)

## STORY 38. March 22, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Hears Some News

Johnny Chuck sat in his doorway looking over the Green Meadows. He felt very fine. He had had a good breakfast in the sweet clover patch. He had had a good nap on his own doorstep. By and by he saw the Merry Little Breezes of old Mother West Wind hurrying in his direction. They seemed in a very great hurry. They didn’t stop to kiss the buttercups or tease the daisies.

Johnny pricked up his small ears and watched them hurry up the hill.

“Good morning, Johnny Chuck,” panted the first Merry Little Breeze, “have you heard the news?”

“What news?” asked Johnny Chuck.

“The news about old Mrs. Chuck,” replied the Merry Little Breezes.

Johnny shook his head.

“No,” said he, “what is it?”

The Merry Little Breezes grew very, very sober.

“It is partly bad news,” they replied.

“What is it? Tell me quick!” begged Johnny.

Just then Reddy Fox came hopping and skipping down the Lone Little Path.

“Hi, Johnny Chuck, have you heard the news?”

“No,” said Johnny Chuck. “Do tell me quick!”

Reddy Fox grinned maliciously, for Reddy likes to torment others. “It’s about old Mrs. Chuck,” said Reddy.

“I know that already,” replied Johnny. “But, please, what is it?”

“Farmer Brown’s Boy has caught old Mrs. Chuck, and now I wouldn’t wonder but what he will come up here and catch you,” replied Reddy, turning a somersault.

Johnny Chuck grew pale. He had not seen Mrs. Chuck to speak to since he ran away from home. Now he was glad that he had run away, and yet sorry, oh, so sorry that anything had happened to Mrs. Chuck. Two big tears came into his eyes and ran down his funny little black nose. The Merry Little Breezes saw this, and one of them hurried over and whispered in Johnny Chuck’s ear.

“Don’t cry, Johnny Chuck,” whispered the Merry Little Breeze “Old Mother Chuck got away, and Farmer Brown’s boy is still wondering how she did it.”

Johnny’s heart gave a great throb of relief.

“I don’t believe that Farmer Brown’s boy will catch me,” said Johnny Chuck, “for my house has two back doors.”

*(Mother West Wind’s Animal Friends, Chapter 9, “Johnny Chuck Finds a Use for his Back Door.”)*

## STORY 39. March 23, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Finds a Use for His Back Door.

Johnny Chuck awoke very early one morning. He stretched and yawned and then just lay quietly enjoying himself for a few minutes. His bedchamber, way down underground, was snug and warm and very, very comfortable. By and by Johnny Chuck heard a noise up by his front door.

“I wonder what if going on out there,” said Johnny Chuck to himself, and jumping up he tiptoed softly up the long hall until he had almost reached his doorway. Then he heard a voice which he had heard before, and it made little shivers run all over him. It was the voice of Granny Fox.

“So this is where that fat little Chuck has made his home,” said Granny Fox.

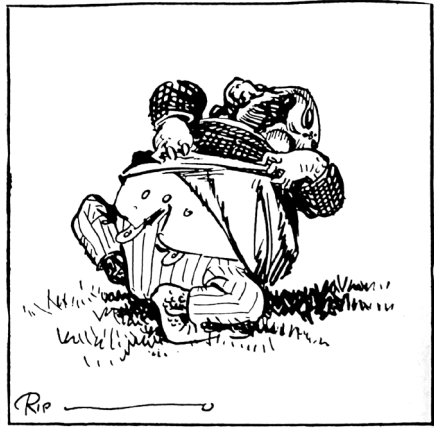
“Yes,” replied another voice. “This is where Johnny Chuck lives, for I saw him yesterday.”

Johnny pricked up his ears, for that was the voice of Reddy Fox.

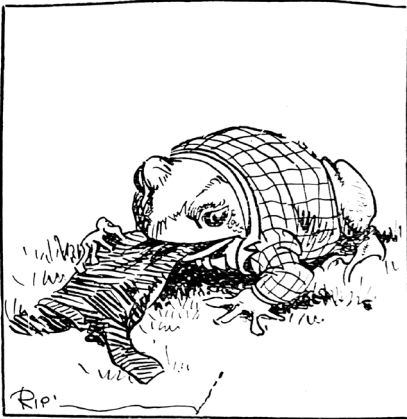
Illustrations. March 18 to March 23, 1912.



35. The Digging Match



36. Old Mr. Toad Changes His Suit



37. What Mr. Toad did with His Old Suit



38. Johnny Chuck Hears Some News

“Do you think he is in here now,” inquired Granny Fox.

“I am sure of it,” replied Reddy, “for I have been watching ever since jolly, round, red Mr. Sun threw his nightcap off this morning, and Johnny Chuck has not put his nose out yet.”

“Good,” said Granny Fox; “I think fat Chuck will taste good for breakfast.”

Johnny felt the cold shivers run over him again as he heard Granny Fox and Reddy Fox smack their lips. Then Granny Fox spoke again.

“You lie down behind that bunch of grass over there. Reddy, and I will lie down behind the old apple tree. When he comes out, you just jump into his doorway and I will catch him before he can say Jack Robinson.”

Johnny waited and listened and listened, but all was as still as still could be. Then Johnny Chuck tiptoed back along the hall to his bedroom, and sat down to think. He felt sure that Granny Fox and Reddy were waiting for him just as he had heard them plan to do.

“However am I going to know when they leave,” said Johnny Chuck to himself. Then he remembered the back door which he had taken such care to make, and which Peter Rabbit had laughed at him for taking the trouble to make. He had hidden it so cunningly in the long grass and had so carefully removed all sand from around it that he felt quite sure that no one had found it.

Very softly Johnny Chuck crept along the back passageway. Very, very cautiously he stuck his little black nose out of the doorway and sniffed. Yes, he could smell foxes but he knew that they were not at his back door. Little by little he crept out until he could peep through the grass. There lay Reddy Fox behind a big clump of grass with his eyes fixed on Johnny Chuck’s front door, and there behind the apple tree lay Granny Fox taking her ease, but already to jump when Reddy should give the word. Johnny Chuck almost giggled out loud as he saw how eagerly Reddy Fox was watching for him. Then Johnny Chuck had an idea that almost made him laugh aloud.

*(Mother West Wind’s Animal Friends, Chapter 9, “Johnny Chuck Finds a Use for his Back Door.)*

## CHAPTER 40. March 25, 1912.

### Bumble the Bee Proves a Friend Indeed

Old Granny Fox lay dozing under the old apple tree while Reddy Fox squatted behind a big clump of grass and impatiently watched Johnny Chuck’s front door. Granny Fox promised that they would catch Johnny Chuck and have him for breakfast. A little way off, where the grass grows tall, Johnny Chuck sat in his back doorway and watched them. His black eyes snapped and he chuckled to himself as he thought of how he was fooling them, for you see, they did not know he had a back door.

Pretty soon along came Bumble the Bee looking for honey. He came bustling and

humming through the tall grass and settled on a tall dandelion right on the door-step of Johnny Chuck's back door.

"Good morning," grumbled Bumble the Bee.

Johnny put a hand on his lips and beckoned to Bumble to come inside.

Now Bumble the Bee is a gruff and rough fellow; but he is a good fellow, too, when you know him. Johnny Chuck had many times told him of places where the flowers grew thick and sweet, so when Johnny beckoned to him Bumble came at once.

"Will you do something for me, Bumble?" whispered Johnny Chuck.

"Of course, I will," replied Bumble, in his gruff voice. "What is it?"

Then Johnny Chuck told Bumble the Bee how Granny and Reddy Fox were waiting for him to come out for his breakfast and how they had planned to gobble him up for their own breakfast. Bumble the Bee grew very indignant.

"What do you want me to do, Johnny Chuck?" he asked. "If I can help you just tell me how."

Johnny whispered something to Bumble the Bee and Bumble laughed right out loud. Then he buzzed up out of the doorway, and Johnny crept up to watch. Straight over to where Reddy Fox was squatted behind the clump of grass flew Bumble the Bee so swiftly that Johnny could hardly see him. Suddenly Reddy gave a yelp and sprang into the air. Johnny Chuck clapped both hands over his mouth to keep from laughing out loud, for, you see, Bumble the Bee had stuck his sharp little lance<sup>18</sup> into one of the ears of Reddy Fox.

Granny Fox looked up and scowled.

"Keep still," she whispered.

Just then Reddy yelped louder than before, for Bumble had stung him in the other ear.

"What's the matter?" snapped Granny Fox.

"I don't know!" cried Reddy Fox, hanging on to both ears.

"You are—" began Granny Fox, but Johnny Chuck never knew what she was going to say Reddy Fox was, for, you see, just then Bumble the Bee thrust his sharp little lance into one of her ears, and before she could turn round he had done the same thing to the other ear.

Granny Fox didn't wait for any more. She started off as fast as she could go with Reddy Fox after her, and every few steps they rubbed their ears and shook their heads as if they thought they could shake out the pain.

(*Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*, Chapter 9, "Johnny Chuck Finds a Use for his Back Door.")

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18 An error. Male bees do not sting.

## STORY 41: March 26, 1912.

### Happy Jack Squirrel has an Adventure

Happy Jack Squirrel poked his head out of his warm nest of leaves in the top of an oak tree. Happy Jack is an early riser, and he saw no one but old Mother West Wind who was just coming down from the Purple Hills with her big bag of Merry Little Breezes.

Happy Jack scampered down the tree and washed his face and hands, then he carefully brushed his gray coat and combed out his tail.

“I think,” said Happy Jack, “I’ll take a walk this fine morning.” So he hopped and skipped through the Green Forest, stopping now and then to dig up a nut which he had buried a long time before. Pretty soon he came to the edge of a field. Now Happy Jack always feels safest when he is among the trees, and he very seldom goes far from them. On the other side of the field, he could see a big chestnut tree which he had never visited, and he wanted to see what the prospects were for nuts. But it was a long way around the field, and Happy Jack was feeling rather lazy.

He looked this way and that way to see if the way was clear. He saw no danger anywhere.

“I believe I’ll risk it,” said Happy Jack to himself, and started to run across the field.

Now some one else was up very early that morning. It was Mr. Goshawk. He was sailing, very high up in the sky, so high that he was just a mere speck, and that is why Happy Jack did not see him.

Now, Mr. Goshawk was very hungry, and he dearly loves young squirrel. His eyes are so sharp that he can see a very great distance. No sooner did Happy Jack start out across the open field than Mr. Goshawk saw him.

“Ha, ha, ha,” said Mr. Goshawk. “There is my breakfast.”

He closed his wings and down he came like a bullet out of the skies. His great claws were stretched wide to seize Happy Jack when something prompted Happy Jack to look up. His heart almost stopped beating. But Happy Jack is very quick and, like a flash, he dodged to one side. Mr. Goshawk screamed with disappointment and rage as he spread his broad wings and stopped himself before striking the ground. Then up he flew only to come down again fiercer than before. Again Happy Jack dodged, and Mr. Goshawk got nothing but a few hairs from Happy’s tail.

Poor Happy Jack. He knew that he never could get across that open field without being caught, for sooner or later Mr. Goshawk would be quicker than he. As he ran, he looked this way and that way. Just a little way ahead he saw a hole. Running as fast as he could make his legs go he reached the hole just in time to dodge into it as Mr. Goshawk made a last vicious clutch at him.

“Oh,” cried Happy Jack, “however will I get home again?”

But though Happy Jack did not know it Mr. Goshawk had flown away, for he was too hungry to wait for a frightened squirrel to come out again.

## STORY 42. March 27, 1912.

### Happy Jack has Another Scare

Happy Jack Squirrel's heart was beating pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat. He had a very, very narrow escape from Mr. Goshawk, who had tried very hard to get Happy Jack for his breakfast. Happy had dodged into a hole in the ground and Mr. Goshawk had flown away screaming with rage and disappointment.

Now, Happy Jack Squirrel is not at home in holes in the ground, and he felt very much a stranger in a strange place. He did not know that Mr. Goshawk had flown away, and he was afraid to even peep outside to see.

"I wonder who lives here?" said Happy Jack to himself. "Anyway, I don't believe he will care if I stay a little while."

Just then there was a grumbling and snarling way down beneath Happy Jack at the end of the long hill in which he sat. It sounded very much as if someone was at home and as if someone did care.

"Who's there?" cried a cross voice.

"It's just me, Happy Jack Squirrel, and I'm hiding from Mr. Goshawk," replied Happy, in a very small voice.

"Go hide somewhere else," replied the voice more crossly than before.

"I don't dare go out; please let me stay," begged Happy Jack.

"If you don't get out of my house, I'll come up there and eat you up, hair, bones and all," replied the voice with a terrible snarl.

Happy Jack felt every separate hair stand on end. What was he to do? There was Mr. Goshawk somewhere outside and somewhere inside was some terrible creature. He heard sharp claws beginning to scratch around down below as if the owner was getting ready to carry into effect his terrible threats. Anyway, it would be better to run for his life than to be gobbled up down there underground.

Happy Jack thrust his head out of the doorway and looked this way and that way. The way seemed clear. Out he darted and started across the open field as fast as his legs would take him. He didn't have to look around to know, that something, was right behind him. It was the owner of the house in which he had been hiding.

Across the open field ran Happy Jack, and when he reached the first tree, he gave a great sigh of relief as he sprang up the gray trunk. He felt safe now, so he turned to look down to see who had followed him. Who do you think it was? Why, it was just old Grandfather Chuck, and now he was sitting at the foot of the tree and grinning up at Happy Jack. My how Happy Jack scolded, for if he had known that it was only



Grandfather Chuck he wouldn't have been one bit afraid.

## STORY 43. March 28, 1912.

### Happy Jack Squirrel Makes a Find

Happy Jack Squirrel had had a wonderful day. He had found some big chestnut trees which he had never seen before and which promised to give him all the nuts which he would want for all next winter. Now he was thinking of going home, for it was getting late in the afternoon. He looked across the open field where Mr. Goshawk had so nearly caught him that morning. His home was on the other side.

"It's a long way round," said Happy Jack to himself, "but it is better to be safe and sure."

So Happy Jack started on his long journey around the open field. Now, Happy Jack's eyes are bright and there is very little that Happy Jack does not see. So, as he was jumping from one tree to another, he spied something down on the ground which excited his curiosity.

"I must stop and see what that is," said Happy Jack. So down the tree he ran, and in a few minutes, he had the queer thing which had caught his eyes. It was smooth, and black, and white, and at one end it was very sharp, with a tiny little barb. Happy Jack found it out by pricking himself with it.

"Ouch," he cried, and dropped the queer thing. Pretty soon he noticed there were a lot more on the ground.

"I wonder what they are?" said Happy Jack. "They don't grow, for they haven't any roots. They are not thorns, for there is no plant from which they could come. They are not alive, so what can they be?"

Now, Happy Jack's eyes are bright, but sometimes he doesn't use them to the very best advantage. He was so busy examining the queer things on the ground that he never once thought to look up in the tops of the trees. If he had he would not have been so much puzzled. As it was he just gathered up three or four of the queer things and started on again. On the way he met Peter Rabbit and showed Peter what he had. Now, you know Peter Rabbit is very curious. He just couldn't sit still, but must scamper over to the place Happy Jack Squirrel told him about.

"You'd better be careful, Peter Rabbit; they're very sharp," shouted Happy Jack.

But, as usual, Peter was in too much of a hurry to heed what was said to him. Lipperty-lipperty-lip, lipperty-lipperty-lip, went Peter Rabbit through the woods, as fast as his long legs would take him. Then suddenly he squealed and sat down to nurse one of his feet. But he was up again in a flash with another squeal louder than before. Peter Rabbit had found the queer things that Happy Jack Squirrel had told him about. One was sticking in his foot and one was in the white patch on the seat of his trousers.

*(The Adventures of Prickly Porky, Chapter 1)*

## STORY 44. March 29, 1912.

### The Stranger from the North

The Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind were excited. Yes, sir, they certainly were excited. They had met Happy Jack Squirrel and Peter Rabbit and they were full of the news of the queer things that Happy Jack and Peter had found over in the Green Forest. They hurried this way and that way over the Green Meadows and told everyone they met. Finally, they reached the Smiling Pool and excitedly told Grandfather Frog all about it.

Grandfather Frog smoothed down his white and yellow waistcoat and looked very wise, for you know that Grandfather Frog is very old.

“Pooh,” said Grandfather Frog. “I know what they are.”

“What?” cried all the Merry Little Breezes together. “Happy Jack says he is sure they do not grow, for there are no strange plants over there.”

Grandfather Frog opened his big mouth and snapped up a foolish green fly that one of the Merry Little Breezes blew over to him.

“Chugarum,” said Grandfather Frog. “Things do not have to be on plants in order to grow. Now I am sure that those things grew and that they did not grow on a plant.”

The Merry Little Breezes looked puzzled. “What is there that grows and doesn’t grow on a plant?” asked one of them.

“How about the claws on Peter Rabbit’s toes and the hair of Happy Jack’s tail?” asked Grandfather Frog.

The Merry Little Breezes looked foolish. “Of course,” they cried. “We didn’t think of that. But we are quite sure that these queer things that prick so were not claws, and certainly they were not hair.”

“Don’t you be too sure,” said Grandfather Frog. “You go over to the Green Forest and look up in the tree tops instead of down on the ground, then come back and tell me what you find.”

Away raced the Merry Little Breezes to the Green Forest and began to search among the tree tops. Presently, way up in the top of a big poplar, they found a stranger. He was bigger than any of the little meadow people and he had long, sharp teeth with which he was stripping the bark off of the tree. The hair of his coat was long and out of it peeped a thousand little spears just like the queer things that Happy Jack and Peter Rabbit had told them about.

“Good morning,” said the Merry Little Breezes politely.

“Mornin’,” grunted the stranger in the tree top.

“May we ask where you come from?” said one of the Merry Little Breezes.

“I come from the North Woods,” said the stranger, and then went on about his

business, which seemed to be to strip every bit of the bark from the tree and eat it.

*(The Adventures of Prickly Porky, Chapter 2)*

## STORY 45. March 30, 1912.

### Prickly Porky Makes Friends

The Merry Little Breezes soon spread the news all over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest that a stranger had come from the north. At once all the little meadow people and forest folk made some excuse to go over to the big poplar, where the stranger was so busy eating. At first, he was very shy and had nothing to say. He was a queer fellow and he was so big and his teeth were so sharp and so long that his visitors kept their distance.

Reddy Fox, who, you know, is a great boaster and likes to brag of how smart he is and how brave he is, came with the rest of the little meadow people.

“Pooh,” exclaimed Reddy Fox. “Who’s afraid of that fellow?”

Just then the stranger began to come down the tree. Reddy backed away.

“It looks as if you were afraid, Reddy Fox, said Peter Rabbit.

“I’m not afraid of anything,” said Reddy Fox, and swelled himself up to look twice as big as he really is.

“It seems to me I hear Bowser the Hound,” piped up Striped Chipmunk.

Now, Striped Chipmunk had not heard Bowser the Hound at all when he spoke, but just then there was the patter of heavy feet among the dried leaves, and sure enough there was Bowser himself. My, how everybody did run! Everybody but the stranger from the north. He kept on coming down the tree just the same. Bowser saw him and stopped in surprise. He had never seen anything quite like this big black fellow.

“Bow, wow, wow,” shouted Bowser in his deepest voice.

Now, when Bowser used that great deep voice of his he was accustomed to seeing all the little meadow people and forest folk run, but the stranger did not run. Bowser was so surprised that he just stood still and stared, then he growled his deepest growl. Still the stranger paid no attention to him. Bowser did not know what to make of it.

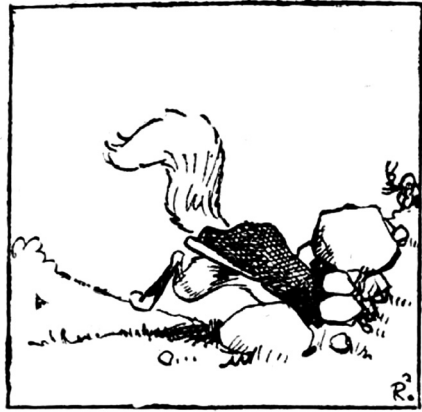
“I’ll teach that fellow a lesson,” said Bowser to himself. “I’ll shake him, and shake him and shake him until he hasn’t any breath left.”

By that time the stranger was down on the ground and starting for another tree minding his own business. Then something happened. Bowser made a rush at him and instead of running, what do you suppose the stranger did? He just rolled himself up in a tight ball with his head tucked down in his vest. When he was rolled up that way all the little spears hidden in the hair of his coat stood right out until he looked like a great chestnut burr. Bowser stopped short. Then he reached out his nose and sniffed at this queer think. Slap! the tail of the stranger struck Bowser the Hound right across the side

Illustrations. March 25 to March 30, 1912.



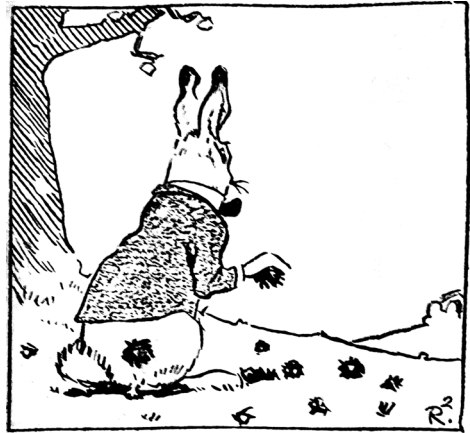
40. Bumble the Bee Proves a Friend Indeed



41. Happy Jack Squirrel has an Adventure



42. Happy Jack has Another Scare



43. Happy Jack Squirrel Makes a Find



44. The Stranger from the North



45. Prickly Porky Makes Friends

of the face and a dozen of those little spears were left sticking there just like a pin-cushion.

“Wow! wow! wow! wow!” yelled Bowser at the top of his lungs and started for home with his tail between his legs and yelling with every jump. Then the stranger unrolled himself and smiled and all the little meadow people and forest folk who had been watching shouted aloud with joy.

And this is the way that Prickly Porky, the Porcupine, made friends.

*(The Adventures of Prickly Porky, Chapter 3)*

## STORY 46. April 1, 1912

### Bowser the Hound Stays at Home

Bowser the Hound had crept away under the porch of Farmer Brown’s house, just as far under as he could get. Bowser’s face was sore, very sore indeed, so sore that he didn’t want to see anybody or have anybody see him. More than that, Bowser the Hound was frightened. He wouldn’t admit it. Oh, my, no! Bowser wouldn’t admit that he was afraid of anything or anybody on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest. And he never had been before.

But Prickly Porky the porcupine was a new comer to the Green Forest and Bowser didn’t know just what to make of a fellow who carried a thousand little spears in his coat, spears that were longer and sharper than the barbs on the wire fence. Five of them were sticking in Bowser’s face this very minute and he couldn’t get them out. Every time he touched them they seemed to go in deeper and made him whimper.

“Here Bowser, old fellow, come on!” cried a cheery voice. It was his master, Farmer Brown’s boy.

Bowser wriggled the tip of his tail but he didn’t say anything and he didn’t move to come out. His master whistled and whistled. Then he grew impatient. “I believe that dog has gone off hunting again without me,” he said. “I shall have to chain him up and punish him.”

Bowser heard and understood. How he did hate to be chained up! Very slowly he crawled out from under the porch and in the most abject way crept to his master’s feet. Farmer Brown’s boy looked down at him and opened, his mouth to scold. But he didn’t. Instead his mouth stayed wide open in sheer surprise. Bowser’s face was a sight. It was puffed and swollen and sticking out from it were five of Prickly Porky’s sharp little spears. Farmer Brown’s boy had never seen any before, but he knew what they were and how they must hurt, so instead of scolding he just reached down and patted Bowser very gently.

“Poor old Bowser! Do they hurt?” he asked.

Bowser wagged his tail and whined. His master took hold of one of the little spears and pulled, but it would not come out, for you know there was a little barb on the other

end that held it. Bowser yelped with pain. Then his master went into the house and got a pair of forceps. He sat down and took Bowser's head between his knees and with the forceps he jerked out the five little spears. Big tears rolled down Bowser's cheeks, it hurt so, but he was so thankful to have them out that he licked his master's hand and did his best to thank him. His master patted him and then ran into the house. A few minutes later he came out with his gun in his hands.

"Come on, Bowser! We'll get even with Prickly Porky!" said he.

But Bowser refused to go. He couldn't be coaxed. For the first time in his life Bowser preferred to stay at home.

## STORY 47. April 2, 1912.

### Farmer Brown's Boy Hunts for Prickly Porky

Farmer Brown's boy entered the Green Forest with his gun on his shoulder. He was alone, for he could not induce Bowser the Hound to go with him. Instead, Bowser crawled as far under the porch as he could and nursed his sore face, from which his master had pulled the sharp little spears that Prickly Porky had put there.

"Just let me set eyes on that porcupine and that will be the end of him," said Farmer Brown's boy, and scowled fiercely as he said it. But he didn't know in what part of the Green Forest Bowser had found Prickly Porky and, to tell the truth, he didn't know much about porcupines anyway, for he had never seen one. You know, Prickly Porky was a newcomer to the Green Forest.

So, Farmer Brown's boy strode along making as little noise as possible and looking under every bush and behind every old log and stump. The Merry Little Breezes saw him and guessed what he was doing. They tickled and laughed, for they knew, as you know, that the place to look for Prickly Porky is in the tops of the trees, for that is where he spends most of his time, and they know that at that very minute he was in the top of a tall poplar way over on the other side of the Green Forest. They hurried over to tell him that Farmer Brown's boy was looking for him with a gun.

Prickly Porky stopped eating long enough to listen to what they had to say.

"Shucks!" said Prickly Porky, "I'm not afraid of him."

"You're a boaster, just a great big boaster! Why, you're a worse boaster than Reddy Fox!" cried the Merry Little Breezes. You see, they knew that all the other little meadow people and forest folk were very, very much afraid of Farmer Brown's boy and they just couldn't believe Prickly Porky when he said that he was not afraid.

"No such thing!" replied Prickly Porky, indignantly. "I've never done him any harm, so why should he do me any harm? If he comes this way, I'll show you that I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid of anybody or anything."

"Oh, oh, Prickly Porky! You're the worst boaster we ever knew! cried the Merry Little Breezes, for you see they couldn't really believe that he meant it. They didn't

know that up in the north woods where he had come from no one ever bothers the porcupines. So off they raced to tell all the little meadow people and forest folk of Prickly Porky's boast, and all without exception straight-away hurried to hide near the tall poplar and see what the boaster would do if Farmer Brown's boy came that way with his gun.

And all the time Prickly Porky kept on eating as placidly and care-free as if there was no such thing as a boy with a gun.

## STORY 48. April 3, 1912.

### Prickly Porky Makes Good his Boast

Farmer Brown's boy was tired and he was cross. He had tramped and tramped through the Green Forest in search of Prickly Porky, but not so much as one of his little spears had he found. You see, he had not been looking in the right place. He had not once thought to look up in the tops of the trees, for he knew nothing about porcupines or their habits. Finally, he sat down to rest under a tall poplar tree.

"If I could just get a glimpse of that fellow I'd fill him full of shot," growled Farmer Brown's boy.

Now he thought that no one heard but he was mistaken. Dozens of little ears heard him. Striped Chipmunk, peeping out of a hole in the ground not three feet away, heard him and shivered as he rolled his bright little eyes up to the top of the tall poplar. Peter Rabbit, squatting behind a thick bush, rolled his eyes up to the top of the tall poplar and shivered too. So did Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk and Happy Jack Squirrel and Billy Mink and Bobby Coon and a lot of other little meadow people and forest folk who were hiding close by. Reddy Fox didn't shiver. He just grinned wickedly and waited, taking great care to keep out of sight. Down in his heart he was afraid of Prickly Porky and he hoped that Farmer Brown's boy would make good his dreadful threat. And up in the top of the tall poplar, someone else heard the dreadful threat. It was Prickly Porky himself.

He stopped eating and looked down at Farmer Brown's boy and his gun, saw Reddy Fox grinning and the other little meadow, people and forest folk shivering with fright. Prickly Porky smiled to himself. "So they think I'm a boaster because I said I'm not afraid, do they?" he muttered. Then very slowly, for he never hurries, he began to climb down the tree.

Farmer Brown's boy heard his claws rattling on the tree and looked up. He was so surprised that for a minute he just stared foolishly. Then he sprang to his feet and threw up his gun. Every one shut their eyes and put their hands over their ears—everyone but Reddy Fox, who grinned more wickedly than ever. But still Prickly Porky kept right on climbing down.

But Farmer Brown's boy didn't shoot. "I'll wait until he gets nearer and then I'll be sure of him." said he.

So he waited, and all the time Prickly Porky kept right on climbing down. Farmer Brown's boy didn't know what to make of it. "It's a shame to shoot him, for I can kill him with a club," said he, and reached for a stick. And still Prickly Porky came down.

When he reached the ground what do you think he did? Why, he walked right over and sniffed at the gun of Farmer Brown's boy, and gave a funny little grunt, as if to say: "You won't hurt me," and then he turned his back and slowly walked over to another tree and began to climb.

The freckled face of Farmer Brown's boy broke into a broad laugh. "Well," said he, "you certainly have got nerve! You seem to be minding your own business, so I guess I won't interfere."

And shouldering his gun he tramped off through the Green Forest.

## STORY 49. April 4, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Dares Prickly Porky

The little meadow people and forest folk could hardly believe the evidence of their own eyes when they saw Prickly Porky walk right up to Farmer Brown's boy and then calmly turn his back and walk away unharmed. They just gazed with eyes and mouth wide open with astonishment as Farmer Brown's boy tramped off through the Green Forest. Then they hastened to pay their respects to Prickly Porky and to tell him how brave they thought him. The merry little breezes were very much ashamed to think that they had called him a boaster because he had said that he was not afraid, and they very meekly told him so.

Prickly Porky's little eyes twinkled. "Some folks would say that I was stupid instead of brave," said he, "but I wasn't either. You see, I was sure that he wouldn't hurt me, so why should I have been afraid? If you mind your own affairs and never let people think that you are afraid you will seldom have cause for fear."

Only Reddy Fox was disappointed. Reddy was already jealous of Prickly Porky. He had hoped to see Prickly Porky come to grief. He is a great boaster himself, and, like most boasters, he is at heart a coward.

"You was simply lucky, that's all," said Reddy, swaggering out where everyone could see him. "That wasn't bravery; it was just foolishness. I'll dare you to go up to Farmer Brown's house with me tonight and steal one of his chickens."

"I don't want one of Farmer Brown's chickens," replied Prickly Porky.

"You mean you don't dare go!" retorted Reddy Fox. "You're afraid, that's what's the matter."

Prickly Porky began to come down the tree again and Reddy began to edge away.

"Who's afraid now?" piped a shrill voice. It sounded very much like Peter Rabbit.

Reddy sent an ugly glance in Peter's direction, but Peter seemed to be very



innocently looking down the Lone Little Path.

“Let’s go right up to Farmer Brown’s now,” said Prickly Porky.

“What! In broad daylight?” cried Reddy Fox.

“Why not? It’s a nice, pleasant walk, Come on, unless you’re afraid,” replied Prickly Porky.

Reddy suddenly remembered some very important business. “I’m very sorry,” he lied glibly, “but I have an engagement down on the Green Meadows which I must attend right away. I’ll meet you here when the moon rises tonight.” With this Reddy started off down the Lone Little Path and pretended not to hear the laughter of the little meadow people and forest folk who had been listening.

## STORY 50. April 5, 1912.

### The Visit to Farmer Brown’s

The silvery moonlight flooded the Green Meadows. It made Farmer Brown’s dooryard almost as light as day. But everywhere that the shadows lay they were very, very black. Up from the Green Forest came two little figures. One was slim and quick-moving. It darted in and out of the shadows along the way and never remained out in the full light longer than was absolutely necessary. When there was an open spot to cross it fled so swiftly as to seem little more than a shadow itself. It was Reddy Fox.

The other figure was stout and chunky. It moved slowly as if nothing could hurry it, and always it moved straight ahead and seemed as well content in the light as when hidden in the shadows. It was Prickly Porky, the porcupine. You see Reddy Fox had dared Prickly Porky to come with him to Farmer Brown’s henhouse and steal a chicken. Prickly Porky had said that he would not steal the chicken, but that he would go with Reddy just to show the latter that he, Prickly Porky, had no fear of Farmer Brown or Bowser the Hound.

Now when Reddy made this foolish dare he had not believed the Prickly Porky would go and he had not intended to go himself. But there were so many of the little meadow people and forest folk waiting to see them start that he could not back out.

As they approached the henhouse Reddy sneaked from brush to tree and from trees to fence. He crawled flat on his stomach, and the rustle of a leaf made him jump. But Prickly Porky plodded along in the most unconcerned manner. The thousand spears hidden in his coat rattled as he walked, and they made Reddy so nervous that he could hardly contain himself.

“Don’t make such a noise!” begged Reddy.

“Why not? What are you afraid of?” asked Prickly Porky.

“I-I-I ain’t afraid of—what was that?” Reddy suddenly stopped and lay very flat.

“I didn’t hear anything,” said Prickly Porky, moving right along.

Illustrations. April 1 to April 6, 1912.



46. Bowser the Hound Stays at home



47. Farmer Brown's Boy Hunts for Prickly Porky



48. Prickly Porky Makes Good his Boast



49. Reddy Fox Dares Prickly Porky



50. The Visit to Farmer Brown's



51. Reddy Fox Goes Hungry

At last they were close to the henhouse. Reddy's mouth began to water. But as usual he was sly. "There's a hole in the floor right by this corner," he whispered. "You go in and frighten the chickens so that they'll run out, and I'll hide right here and catch them."

To himself he thought: "The chickens will make such a noise that they will waken Bowser the Hound and he will waken Farmer Brown's boy, and they will catch Prickly Porky, who is slow and stupid, while I will run away with a fat chicken."

But Prickly Porky didn't want a chicken and he wouldn't go in. "Go in yourself," said he. "I'll watch outside."

Now he was so close to those chickens Reddy couldn't bear the thought of not having at least one. Finally, he mustered up courage and slipped through the hole, and at once Prickly Porky sat down in front of it to keep watch. In fact, he sat so close to it that the spears on his back filled the hole. And as he sat down Prickly Porky smiled as if somehow it was all a good joke.

## STORY 51. April 6, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Goes Hungry

Reddy Fox was in a terrible fix. Here he was, inside of Farmer Brown's henhouse, with dozens of fat chickens right within his reach, and he didn't dare touch one. Yet he was hungry—oh, so hungry! You see, he had crept in through a hole leaving Prickly Porky outside to keep watch, and what had Prickly Porky done but sit down right in front of the hole so that the thousand spears on his back filled the hole up! Reddy Fox simply couldn't get out until Prickly Porky moved.

Reddy was almost afraid to breathe. He knew that if he waked the chickens they would wake Bowser the Hound, and Bowser would wake Farmer Brown's boy, and Reddy shivered and stopped thinking.

He put his mouth as near to those sharp little spears as he dared to and whispered: "Let me out! Prickly Porky, let me out!"

Apparently Prickly Porky did not hear, for he did not move. Reddy did not dare call louder for fear of waking the chickens. What should he do? What could he do? Was ever a fox in such a fix before?

All this time Prickly Porky was sitting very comfortably in front of the hole, smiling to himself as if there was a joke that only he knew. Jimmy Skunk, who is very fond of eggs, came up. "Good evening," said Jimmy politely. "What are you doing here?"

Prickly Porky told him about Reddy Fox inside the henhouse. "And I'm keeping watch outside so that no harm can get in to Reddy," he concluded. And then he grinned.

Jimmy Skunk saw the grin. He looked at the spears that were keeping others out of the henhouse and realized that they were also keeping Reddy in.

“Ho! ho! ho!” It seemed, as if Jimmy Skunk would explode with laughter. Then he hurried off to tell Bobby Coon. Bobby came, and when he saw the joke he exploded just as Jimmy Skunk had. One after another they hunted up and told Peter Rabbit, Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter and all the other little people who were not in bed, and all hurried up to see for themselves. Finally, they made such noise that Reddy Fox grew still more nervous. They certainly would waken Bowser the Hound! There was nothing for him but to dig his way out. So over in one corner Reddy began to dig. The ground was packed hard and he found it slow, hard work.

Just as Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun began his daily climb up in the sky, a rooster in Farmer Brown’s hen house crowed loud and long. He was answered by the deep voice of Bowser the Hound. And just at that minute a bedraggled form, his coat full of sand, crept out from a hole under a corner of the henhouse. Hungry and tired and angry, he sneaked away across the Green Meadows. It was Reddy Fox.

## STORY 52. April 8, 1912

### Peter Rabbit has an Idea.

Peter Rabbit sat at the top of the Crooked Little Path that goes down the hill. He was picking his teeth with one of Prickly Porky’s little spears and thinking. Yes, sir, Peter Rabbit actually was thinking. He doesn’t do it very often. He is such a happy-go-lucky fellow that he seldom worries. about anything and wastes no time planning for the future.

But this morning an idea had come to him and he just had to sit down and think it over. And what do you think had given him the idea? Why that very little spear of Prickly Porky’s with which he was picking his teeth. The more he thought about it the better the idea seemed. Peter began to grin. Finally, he hitched up his trousers and started over to Johnny Chuck’s house.

Johnny Chuck was sitting on his doorstep wondering if he had better make a new house and move. He hated to leave the old apple tree under which his house was, and yet was afraid that Granny Fox knew where it was. He looked up as Peter Rabbit came bobbing up. The smile on Peter’s face was so broad that Johnny had to smile too.

“Hello!” said Peter Rabbit. “Do you see this?” As he spoke he held out the little spear which had fallen from Prickly Porky’s coat.

“Yes,” said Johnny Chuck, “it is one of Prickly Porky’s quills. What of it?”

“It’s given me an idea,” replied Peter.

“You don’t mean it, Peter! I didn’t know that you ever stopped playing long enough to have an idea,” cried Johnny Chuck.

“I don’t have ‘em very often, but I’ve got one this time and it’s the best ever,” replied Peter.

Then he came very close to Johnny Chuck and whispered. At first Johnny looked

doubtful, but as Peter talked, he became interested and by the time Peter had finished Johnny Chuck was laughing so that he shook all over.

“What do you think of it?” asked Peter. “It won’t cost us anything but a little work to try it, and perhaps it will work. It’s worth trying anyway,” replied Johnny Chuck.

Then Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck put their funny little heads together and planned just how they would work out Peter’s idea. And every few minutes they had to stop and laugh at their plan. It really did seem so simple that it was absurd.

Reddy Fox, coming along the Lone Little Path, saw them plotting together.

“Now I wonder what those two are up to,” said Reddy to himself. But, of course, he didn’t know that Peter Rabbit had had an idea. And if he had known he certainly wouldn’t have believed that it would concern him. And yet it did.

## STORY 53. April 9, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Works Out His Idea

Peter Rabbit had had a very busy night and he was tired. He stopped at the top of the hill to rest a bit before going down the Crooked Little Path onto the Green Meadows to Johnny Chuck’s house. After a while he picked up a bundle and started on. What do you think that bundle was? Why it was a lot of the little spears from the coat of Prickly Porky the Porcupine. Peter had spent the whole night collecting them under the trees where Prickly Porky had been feeding.

Johnny Chuck saw him coming and hastened it to meet him.

“Did you get them?” he shouted as soon as Peter was within hearing. Peter held up the bundle of quills, as Prickly Porky’s little spears are called. Then Johnny hurried faster than ever to help bring them in.

“Did you tell Prickly Porky what you wanted them for?” asked Johnny.

Peter shook his head. “I haven’t told anyone and I’m not going to,” said he.

“I’ve been thinking over your idea,” said Johnny Chuck and do you know I believe it will work?”

“Of course it will,” replied Peter, spreading out the quills and dividing them into two piles. “Reddy Fox is afraid of Prickly Porky. So is Bowser the Hound. Neither of them will anywhere near that part of the Green Forest where Prickly Porky lives, for both are afraid of meeting him again. Now if they come prowling around here and find these little spears in the path they will just naturally think that Prickly Porky is likely to be somewhere around and they won’t take any chances. Now you take your share and scatter them in all the paths that lead up to your house, and I’ll take my share and scatter them all around the sweet clover patch. It will be as safe, then, as the old brier patch and will save me a lot of trouble and running.”

So Johnny Chuck took his share of Prickly Pork’s quills and carefully scattered them around in all the little paths that led up to his house. Peter Rabbit took his share

over to the sweet clover patch and scattered them around on all sides. Some he placed so that the points stuck up in such a way that if anyone as heavy as Bowser the Hound should step on them, they would be quite likely to prick sharply.

When the work was done, Peter and Johnny sat on the latter's doorstep to rest. Pretty soon Peter began to grow impatient. "I just wish Reddy would come along, said he. "I want to see if my plan will work."

Just then he saw Reddy Fox and Granny Fox 'way over on the Green Meadows. He started off in their direction, hardly waiting long enough to say good-by.

"He's crazy," exclaimed Johnny Chuck. "Supposing it doesn't work and Peter gets caught! Granny Fox will just gobble him up! Oh, dear, I wish Peter wasn't so reckless! And I do hope he won't lead them up here!"

Then Johnny Chuck sat up on his hind legs and anxiously watched Peter Rabbit.

## STORY 54. April 10, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Tries Out his Idea

Old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox were down on the Green Meadows hunting for some of the Fieldmice children. But the Fieldmice children had been warned by the Merry Little Breezes and had wisely hidden, so that not one was to be found. Suddenly Reddy nudged Granny Fox.

"There's Peter Rabbit," he whispered. "He's a long way from the old brier patch."

Granny Fox looked and then she grinned. She could think of nothing that would taste so good as tender young rabbit. And Granny Fox had not forgotten how Peter Rabbit had fooled her once when she had tried to catch him. Now he seemed to be so busy over in the sweet clover patch that she felt sure he had not seen her or Reddy. Just then Peter in the most unconcerned way began to hop in their direction. Granny Fox pulled Reddy down beside her, and they both lay as flat as possible in the meadow grass. Presently Peter stopped and turned his back to them.

"Reddy, you crawl around until you are between him and the old brier patch and then we'll surely catch him," whispered Granny Fox.

So Reddy Fox crawled through the long meadow grass until he was between Peter Rabbit and the old brier patch. Then, very cautiously, Granny Fox began to steal up behind Peter Rabbit.

Now, all this time Peter was just pretending. He had seen Reddy Fox creep off and know just exactly where he was hiding. Although his back was to Granny Fox, he was watching her all the time, for, you know, Peter can see behind him without turning his head. When Granny Fox had gotten as near as Peter thought was safe, he started to run. But, instead of starting for the old brier patch as Granny Fox had expected he would and as Reddy Fox had hoped he would, he started in the opposite direction. He was running straight back to the sweet clover patch.

Now, Peter had been so often to the sweet clover patch that he had worn little paths to it, and it was along one of these that he was running. But Peter was very careful where he stepped, for he was watching out for the sharp little spears of Prickly Porky which he had scattered there.

But Granny Fox knew nothing about Peter Rabbit's idea or Prickly Porky's sharp little spears, and she came flying along the little path as fast as she could run, and that is very fast indeed. She was almost within reach of Peter when she felt a sharp pain in one foot. It hurt so that she fell and rolled over and over. What do you think she found? Why, one of Prickly Porky's little spears! Reddy Fox came up and pulled it out for her. Just a little way off in the middle of the sweet clover patch sat Peter Rabbit watching them and grinning. Reddy ground his teeth and started up the little path. Then he stopped abruptly. He had found more of Prickly Porky's little spears.

Reddy went back to Granny Fox "I believe that Prickly Porky is up there in the sweet clover patch with Peter Rabbit; let's go home, Granny," said he.

And while Granny Fox limped off with Reddy close at her heels, Peter Rabbit sat in the sweet clover patch and laughed softly. And up on the hill sat Johnny Chuck watching, and he was laughing, too.

## STORY 55. April 11, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Laughs at Bowser the Hound.

Johnny Chuck had watched Granny Fox and Reddy Fox when they were fooled by the little spears of Prickly Porky scattered around the sweet clover patch by Peter Rabbit, and he began to wish that he might have a chance to try the same plan, just to see if it would work a second time. He looked at the little spears which he had scattered along every path leading to his house and wondered if they would fool Granny Fox for a second time, or if they would fool anyone else.

"Come on for a walk, Johnny Chuck," shouted Striped Chipmunk.

It was a beautiful day and the Green Meadows looked very tempting. "I believe I will," replied Johnny Chuck.

So together Striped Chipmunk and Johnny Chuck started off for a walk. They stopped to call on Danny Meadow Mouse, and they played a game of hop-scotch with Peter Rabbit. They had such a good time that they forgot to keep a sharp watch for danger. They grew careless, so careless that not one of them saw Bowser the Hound coming until after he had seen them.

Now Striped Chipmunk is small and spry. It did not take him long to find a snug hiding place. And Peter Rabbit's legs are long and meant for running. Off he started, lipperty-lipperty- lip, straight for the old brier patch. But the legs of Johnny Chuck are short, and then Johnny is round and fat, so he cannot run very fast.

Johnny knew that he could reach his house, which was only a little way off, but he knew that Bowser would follow him and find the house. Then Bowser would dig

the house open, and though Johnny Chuck knew that he would be able to get away by means of one of his back doors, he also knew that it would mean building a new home. But there was nowhere else to go, so Johnny started for his house under the apple tree as fast as he could go, and after him ran Bowser the Hound, making a tremendous noise with his great, deep voice.

Now Johnny had forgotten all about those little spears of Prickly Porky until he jumped over one of them in the path. Quite out of breath he reached his doorstep. Then he turned to see what Bowser the Hound would do.

“Bow, wow, wow!” Up the Lone Little Path came Bowser, running with his nose to the ground. “Bow, wo—” Bowser broke off right in the middle of a wow. He stopped running and sniffed suspiciously. He had found some of Prickly Porky’s little spears. The hair on Bowser’s back stood up stiffly and he growled to himself. Then he began to back away. In a few minutes he turned and began to run, anxiously looking back over his shoulder every few minutes, for Bowser the Hound had a wholesome respect for Prickly Porky.

And on his doorstep sat Johnny Chuck, laughing till the tears rolled down his cheeks. It was such a good joke to think that Bowser the Hound was running away from a few of Prickly Porky’s little spears laying in the path.

## STORY 56. April 12, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit’s Big Cousin.

“Look who’s coming!”

Jimmy Skunk pointed over toward the Green Forest. Johnny Chuck looked. Then he rubbed his eyes and looked again.

“Is there anything wrong with my eyes?” asked Johnny Chuck, turning to Jimmy Skunk. Jimmy laughed.

“They look right to me,” he replied.

Johnny Chuck looked again over toward the Green Forest. “When did Peter Rabbit begin to grow?” he asked gravely.

“I don’t know,” replied Jimmy Skunk just as gravely. Then they looked at each other and began to laugh. It certainly was a funny sight coming across the Green Meadows from the Green Forest! Hopping on ahead was Peter Rabbit, looking very important and also very, very proud. Behind him came—whom do you think? You never will guess. It was someone who looks just like Peter Rabbit, only ever so much bigger. His ears are like Peter Rabbit’s only ever so much longer. His hind legs are like Peter Rabbit’s, only ever so much longer. He runs like Peter Rabbit. He sits up like Peter Rabbit.

Peter came hopping along up to Johnny Chuck’s doorstep. “This,” said he, “is my cousin, Jumper the Hare, who has come down from the Great Woods to make me a visit.”



Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk bowed politely and told Jumper the Hare that they were very glad, indeed, to meet him, and that they hoped he would like the Green Meadows so well that he would want to stay. Then Peter Rabbit hustled off with his cousin Jumper the Hare with his most important manner to call on all the other little meadow people.

Johnny Chuck watched them hurry down the Lone Little Path. Every few jumps Peter's big cousin would stop and sit up. He would look this way and look that way, just as if he expected to find someone in hiding ready to spring upon him. "My, what a timid fellow!" exclaimed Chuck. "I'd like to steal up behind him and shout 'Boo!'"

Jimmy Skunk chuckled. Then he whispered to one of the Merry Little Breezes, who raced off as fast as he could go. He stopped at the house of Danny Meadow Mouse. Then Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk saw Danny slip out of his back door and hide behind a clump of grass. A few minutes later along came Peter Rabbit and his big cousin. Just as they passed the clump of grass Danny Meadow Mouse sprang out. Jumper the Hare jumped clear over Peter Rabbit's head and started across the Green Meadows at a rate that made those who saw him gape in astonishment.

"That big fellow afraid of Danny Meadow Mouse!" exclaimed Jimmy Skunk in disgust.

(Significantly rewritten for *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*, Chapter 15, "Peter Rabbit's Big Cousin.")

## STORY 57. April 13, 1912.

### Why Jumper the Hare is Timid

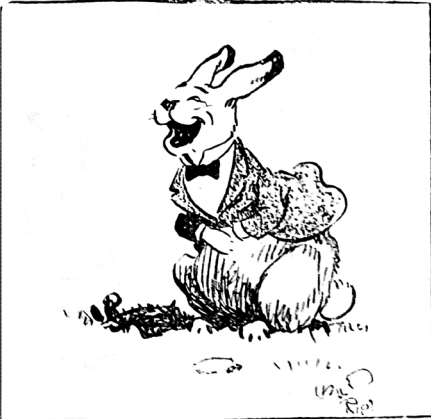
Jumper the Hare had come a long distance to visit his cousin, happy-go-lucky Peter Rabbit. He had come out of the Great Woods of the north, in fact, the very same Great Woods out of which Prickly Porky had come. But the little meadow people and those who live in the Green Forest on the edge of the Green Meadows knew nothing about where he came from nor what kind of a place it was. They simply saw that Jumper the Hare, who was twice the size of Peter Rabbit, was twice as timid as he, and everyone knows that Peter has been known to try to run away from his own shadow.

So, while all were polite to Jumper the Hare, they smiled behind their hands when he had passed, and behind his back called him a coward. He jumped at every shadow and at every little noise. If anyone spoke to him unexpectedly he would jump so that it seemed as if he really might jump right out of his skin. Even Peter Rabbit had to admit that appearances were very much against his cousin—that Jumper seemed very, very much like a coward. Finally, Peter told Jumper the Hare what the others thought of him. Jumper just smiled.

"Peter, who are you afraid of?" he asked.

Peter thought for a few minutes. "Farmer Brown's boy when he has a gun, and Granny Fox when I am a long way from the old brier patch, and old Whitetail the

Illustrations. April 8 to April 13, 1912.



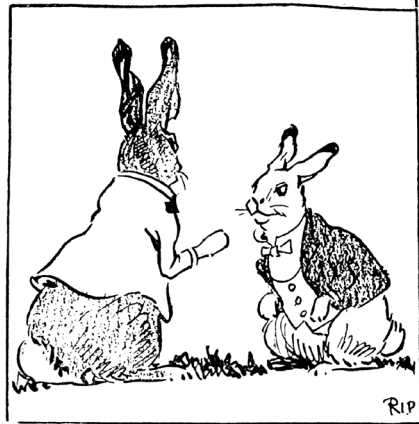
52. Peter Rabbit has an idea



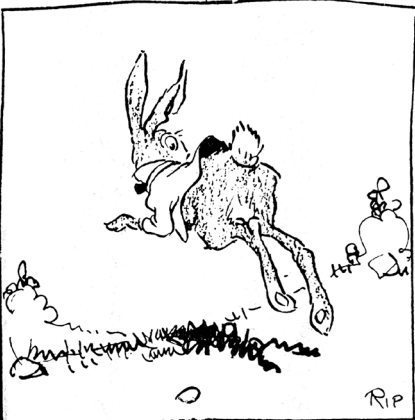
53. Peter Rabbit works out his idea



54. Peter Rabbit tries out his idea



56. Peter Rabbit's Big Cousin



57. Why Jumper the Hare is Timid

Marsh Hawk, if there isn't a hiding place handy."

"Is that all?" asked Jumper.

"Yes," said Peter.

"And usually you can see them a long time before they can get near you?" said Jumper.

"Yes," replied Peter.

Jumper munched a mouthful of sweet clover. "No wonder you don't understand," said he finally. "Why if that was all I had to be afraid of I wouldn't—why I just wouldn't be afraid, that's all. Now up in the Great Woods where I come from live Mr. Panther and Mr. Wolf, and Mr. Fisher and Mr. Bear and Tufty the Lynx, and each one is very fierce and strong. Each one would rather dine on fat Hare than anything else under the sun. So, while some of them try to catch me by day, the others spend their nights looking for me. So, I have had to live always ready to jump at the least sound, hiding in dark places most of the time and with my heart in my mouth whenever I came out into the open. Here on the Green Meadows, it is all open and I have not got used to it. Every sound I hear I think is Mr. Wolf or Mr. Fisher stealing up and I jump. No one is a coward, Peter, who runs away from those bigger and stronger than he."

Peter thought it all over. Then he hastened to tell Johnny Chuck. Johnny told Jimmy Skunk and Jimmy passed the story along. But still there were a few who called Jumper the Hare a coward, and one of these was Reddy Fox.

(Significantly rewritten for *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*, Chapter 15, "Peter Rabbit's Big Cousin.")

## STORY 58. April 15, 1912.

### Jumper the Hare Does a Brave Deed

Careless Peter Rabbit! His curiosity had led him so far from the safety of the old brier patch that it was of no use to him now. He was far, far out on the Green Meadows, and not so much as a bush behind which he could hide. He knew that Granny Fox saw him, and he was sure from the way that she grinned that she had fully made up her mind to get even with him for the tricks he had played on her.

What should Peter do? There wasn't even an old house for him to dodge into. Peter's heart sank way down to his very toes. Of course, his long legs would keep him out of reach of Granny Fox for a while, but there was Reddy Fox coming down the Lone Little Path, and between the two Peter felt sure he must be caught.

Not very far away was Peter's big cousin, Jumper the Hare. Jumper would be safe anyway, for his legs are so long that not even two foxes could catch him. But perhaps he didn't know that Granny Fox was out hunting. Peter would warn him.

Thump! Thump! Peter hit the ground hard with his hind legs, for that is the way Peter Rabbit signals.

Thump! Thump! Thump! That was Jumper's reply. It meant: "I see her. Come over here."

Peter scurried over as fast as he could, and in a few words he told Jumper the Hare of his great fright and of how foolish he had been to get so far away from shelter. Now, everyone on the Green Meadows thought Jumper the Hare a coward because he jumped nervously at every little sound, so Peter expected to see his big cousin run away as soon as he saw the danger. Instead of that Jumper told Peter to sit right down behind him and keep still. Peter did as he was told, but his heart almost stopped beating he was so frightened.

Granny Fox grinned wickedly when she saw Peter Rabbit hide behind Jumper the Hare. "Now I wonder what he thinks a coward can do for him?" said she to herself. "Why, Jumper the Hare will run the minute I say 'boo' to him."

But Jumper the Hare did not run. He kept right between Peter Rabbit and Granny Fox. Finally, Granny Fox lost her patience. She showed all her teeth and then she made a rush at Jumper the Hare. The next instant she was flat on her back, with all the wind knocked out of her body, and Jumper the Hare was sitting looking at her as innocently as if there was no such thing as a terrible kick in those big hind legs of his.

When Granny Fox had regained her breath, her temper was worse than before, and she rushed again, only to be met by those big hind feet of Jumper's and be sent sprawling. Twice more she tried, and then she gave it up and started for home, so sore that she could hardly walk.

And since that day none of the little meadow people have called Jumper the Hare a coward.

(Significantly rewritten for *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*, Chapter 15, "Peter Rabbit's Big Cousin.")

## STORY 59. April 16, 1912.

### Granny Fox Gives Reddy a Scare

Reddy Fox lived with Granny Fox. You see, Reddy was one of a large family, so large that Mother Fox had hard work to feed so many hungry little stomachs and so she had let Reddy go to live with old Granny Fox. Now, Granny Fox was the wisest, slyest, smartest fox in all the country 'round, and now that Reddy had grown so big she thought it about time that he began to learn the things that every fox should know. So every day she took him hunting with her and taught him all the things that she had learned about hunting, about how to steal Farmer Brown's chickens without awakening Bowser the Hound, and all about the thousand and one ways of fooling a dog which she had learned.

This morning Granny Fox had taken Reddy across the Green Meadows, up through the Green Forest, and over to the railroad track. Reddy had never been there before and he didn't know just what to make of it. Granny trotted ahead until they came to a long

bridge. Then she stopped.

“Come here, Reddy, and look down,” she commanded.

Reddy did as he was told, but a glance down made him giddy, so giddy that he nearly fell. Granny Fox grinned.

“Come across,” said she, and ran lightly across to the other side. But Reddy Fox was afraid. Yes, sir, he was afraid to take one step on the long bridge. He was afraid he would fall through into the water or onto the cruel rocks below. Granny Fox ran back to where Reddy sat.

“For shame, Reddy Fox!” said she. “What are you afraid of? Just don’t look down and you will be safe enough. Now come along over with me.”

But Reddy Fox hung back and begged to go home and whimpered. Suddenly Granny Fox sprang to her feet as if in great fright. “Bowser the Hound! Come, Reddy, come!” and she started across the bridge as fast as she could go.

Reddy didn’t stop to look or to think. His one idea was to get away from Bowser the Hound. “Wait, Granny, wait!” he cried, and started after her as fast as he could run. He was in the middle of the bridge before he remembered it at all. When he was at last safely across it was to find old Granny Fox sitting down laughing at him. Then for the first time Reddy looked behind him to see where Bowser the Hound might be. He was nowhere to be seen. Could he have fallen off the bridge?

“Where is Bowser the Hound?” cried Reddy.

“Home in Farmer Brown’s door-yard,” replied Granny Fox dryly. Reddy stared at her for a minute. Then he began to understand that Granny Fox had simply scared him into running across the bridge. Reddy felt very cheap, very cheap indeed.

“Now we’ll run back again,” said Granny Fox.

And this time Reddy did.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 1)*

## STORY 60. April 17, 1912.

### Granny Fox shows Reddy a Trick.

Every day Granny Fox led Reddy Fox over to the long railroad bridge and made him run back and forth across it until he had no fear of it whatever. At first it made him dizzy, but now he could run across at the top of his speed and not mind it in the least.

“I don’t see what good it does to be able to run across a bridge; any one can do that!” exclaimed Reddy one day.

Granny Fox smiled, “Do you remember the first time you tried to do it?” she asked.

Reddy hung his head. Of course, he remembered—remembered that Granny had

had to scare him into crossing the first time.

Suddenly Granny Fox lifted her head. “Hark!” she exclaimed.

Reddy pricked up his sharp-pointed ears. Way off back in the direction from which they had come they heard the baying of a dog. It wasn’t the voice of Bowser the Hound, but of a younger dog. Granny listened for a few minutes. The voice of the dog grew louder as it drew nearer.

“He certainly is following our track,” said Granny Fox. “Now Reddy you run across the bridge and watch from the top of the little hill over there. Perhaps I can show you a trick that will show you why I have made you learn to run across the bridge.”

Reddy trotted across the long bridge and up to the top of the hill, as Granny had told him to. Then he sat down to watch. Granny trotted out in the middle of a field and sat down. Pretty soon, a young hound broke out of the bushes, his nose in Granny’s track. Then he looked up and saw her, and his voice grew still more savage and eager. Granny Fox started to run as soon as she was sure that the hound had seen her, but she did not run very fast. Reddy did not know what to make of it, for Granny seemed to be simply playing with the hound and not really trying to get away from him at all. Pretty soon Reddy heard another sound. It was a long, low rumble. Then there was a distant whistle. It was a train.

Granny heard it, too. As she ran she began to work back toward the long bridge. The train was in sight now. Suddenly Granny Fox started across the bridge so fast that she looked like a little red streak. The dog was close at her heels when she started, and he was so eager to catch her that he didn’t see either the bridge or the train. But he couldn’t begin to run as fast as Granny Fox. Oh my, no! When she had reached the other side he wasn’t half way across and right behind him, whistling for him to get out of the way, was the train.

Oh, the hound gave one frightened yelp and then he did the only thing he could do—he leaped down, down into the swift water below, and the last Reddy saw of him he was frantically trying to swim ashore.

“Now you know why I wanted you to learn to cross a bridge; it’s a very convenient way of getting rid of dogs,” said Granny Fox, as she climbed up beside Reddy.<sup>19</sup>

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 2)*

## STORY 61. April 18, 1912.

### Bowser the Hound isn’t Fooled

Reddy Fox had been taught so much by Granny Fox that he began to feel very wise and very important. Reddy Fox is naturally smart, and he had been very quick to learn the tricks that old Granny Fox had taught him. But Reddy Fox is a boaster. Every day he swaggered about on the Green Meadows and bragged of how smart he was.

<sup>19</sup> This scenario was apparently inspired by a similar one in Ernest Thompson Seton’s *Animals I Have Known* (1898). Seton’s scene is more brutal.

Blacky the Crow grew tired of Reddy's boasting

"If you're so smart, what is the reason you always keep out of sight of Bowser the Hound?" asked Blacky. "For my part, I don't believe that you are smart enough to fool him."

A lot of little meadow people heard Blacky say this, and Reddy knew it. He also knew that if he didn't prove Blacky in the wrong he would be laughed at forever after. Suddenly he remembered the trick that Granny Fox had played on the young hound at the railroad bridge, when the dog had been caught on the bridge by a train and compelled to jump into the water. Why not play the same trick on Bowser and invite Blacky the Crow to see him do it? He would.

"If you will be over at the railroad bridge when the train comes this afternoon I'll show you how easy it is to fool Bowser the Hound," said Reddy.

Blacky agreed to be there and Reddy started off to find out where Bowser was. Blacky told everyone he met how Reddy Fox had promised to fool Bowser the Hound that afternoon and every time he told it he chuckled, as if he thought it the best joke ever.

Blacky the Crow was on hand promptly that afternoon and with him came his cousin, Sammy Jay. Presently they saw Reddy Fox hurrying across the fields and behind him, in full cry, came Bowser the Hound. Just as old Granny Fox had done with the young hound, Reddy allowed Bowser to get very near him, and then, as the train came roaring along, he raced across the long bridge just ahead of it. He had thought that Bowser would be so intent on catching him that he would not notice the train until he was on the bridge and it was too late, as had been the case with the young hound. Then Bowser would have to jump down into the swift river or be run over.

As soon as Reddy was across the bridge he jumped off the track and turned to see what would happen to Bowser the Hound. The train was half way across the bridge, but Bowser was nowhere to be seen. He must have jumped already. Reddy sat down and grinned in the most self-satisfied way.

The long train roared past and Reddy closed his eyes to shut out the dust and smoke. When he opened them again he looked right into the wide open mouth of Bowser the Hound, who was not ten feet away!

"Did you think you could fool me with that old trick?" roared Bowser. Reddy didn't stop to make reply, he just started off at the top of his speed, a badly frightened little fox.

You see, Bowser the Hound knew all about that trick, and he just waited until the train passed and then ran across the bridge right behind it.

And as Reddy Fox, out of breath and tired, ran to seek the aid of Granny Fox in getting rid of Bowser the Hound, he heard a sound that made him grind his teeth.

"Haw, haw, haw! How smart we are!"

It was Blacky the Crow.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 3)*

## STORY 62. April 19, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Loses His Temper

Nowhere on all the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest is there a better-natured little chap than Johnny Chuck. He is so good-natured that Reddy Fox used to sneer at him and say that Johnny didn't fight because he was a coward and didn't dare. But Reddy Fox doesn't say that now. My, my, I guess not! You see, it happened this way:

Johnny Chuck had been growing. Ever since he had run away from old Mrs. Chuck to make a home for himself, he had been growing. He was stout and he was strong. But Reddy Fox hadn't noticed this. He thought of Johnny Chuck only as the timid little chap who first made his home under the old apple tree and was almost afraid of his own shadow.

So one day when Johnny Chuck lost his temper Reddy Fox was treated to the greatest surprise of his life, and ever since then he has had the greatest respect for Johnny Chuck. Johnny was out for a morning walk. He was strolling down the Lone Little Path without a care in the world, when he heard a thin little voice squeaking pitifully over behind a clump of tall meadow grass. "Don't! Oh, please don't!" begged the voice.

"I'm going to eat you up when I get through having some fun with you," replied a gruff voice. Johnny Chuck recognized it at once.

Johnny stole softly up behind the clump of tall meadow grass and peeped through. What he saw made his blood boil. His eyes snapped and he doubled up his fists. There was Reddy Fox knocking poor little Danny Meadow Mouse about. Danny's clothes were torn, his face was scratched, and he was so frightened that he had lost the little bit of voice he did have. Reddy Fox was enjoying himself. There was no doubt of that. He would let Danny Meadow Mouse run a little way, just far enough for Danny to think that perhaps he had really escaped. Then Reddy would pounce on him.

Something snapped inside of Johnny Chuck. He forgot that he had ever been afraid of Reddy Fox. He forgot that Reddy was much bigger than he. He forgot everything but rage. He landed on Reddy Fox like a whirlwind. He took Reddy so by surprise that Reddy was knocked clear off his feet.

"Coward!" roared Johnny Chuck. "Why don't you take someone your own size?"

They tell about that fight on the Green Meadows even now. At first Reddy Fox, forgetting that Johnny Chuck had grown, thought that he would soon teach Johnny not to meddle in other folks' affairs. But he soon found that he had got more than he had bargained for. Then his one thought was to get away. But Johnny Chuck wouldn't let him go. My, how those stout feet of Johnny's, made strong by digging in the hard earth,



did hurt! Reddy's beautiful red coat was soon in tatters. His tail was a sight. When finally he broke away he was a sorry spectacle. He sneaked off to the Laughing Brook to clean himself up, for he did not dare to go home looking so.

"Hurrah for Johnny Chuck!" shouted all the little meadow people, who had gathered to watch the great fight.

"That's nothing," said Johnny Chuck, who had recovered his temper and now felt rather ashamed. Then he put his hands in his pockets and strolled over to the house of Danny Meadow Mouse.

(Reprinted as a single-story booklet by John H. Eggers.)

## STORY 63. April 20, 1912.

### Danny Meadow Mouse is Worried

Danny Meadow Mouse sat on his doorstep with his chin in his hands, and it was very plain to see that Danny had something on his mind. He had only a nod for Jimmy Skunk, and even Peter Rabbit could get no more than a grumpy "good morning." It wasn't that he had been caught napping the day before by Reddy Fox and nearly made an end of. No, it wasn't that. Danny had learned his lesson and Reddy would never catch him again. It wasn't that he was all alone with no one to play with. Danny was rather glad that he was alone. The fact is Danny Meadow Mouse was worried.

Now, worry is one of the worst things in the world, and it didn't seem as if there was anything that Danny Meadow Mouse need worry about. But you know it is the easiest thing in the world to find something to worry over and make yourself uncomfortable about. And when you make yourself uncomfortable you are almost sure to make every one around you equally uncomfortable. It was so with Danny Meadow Mouse. Striped Chipmunk had twice called him "Cross Patch" that morning, and Johnny Chuck, who had fought Reddy Fox for him the day before, had called him "Grumpy." And what do you think was the matter with Danny Meadow Mouse? Why, he was worrying because his tail was short. Yes, sir, that is all that ailed Danny Meadow Mouse that bright morning.

You know some people let their looks make them miserable. They worry because they are homely or freckled, or short or tall, or thin or stout, all of which is very foolish. And Danny Meadow Mouse was just foolish in worrying because his tail was short.

It was short! It certainly was all of that! Danny had never realized how short until he chanced to meet his cousin, Whitefoot, who lives in the Green Forest. He was very elegantly dressed, but the most imposing thing about him was his long, slim, beautiful tail. Danny had at once become conscious of his own stubby little tail, and he had hardly had pride enough to hold his head up, as became an honest Meadow Mouse. And ever since he had been thinking and thinking and wondering how his family came to have such short tails. Then he grew envious and began to wish and wish that he could have a long tail like his cousin, Whitefoot.

He was so busy wishing that he had a long tail that he quite forgot to take care of the tail he did have, and he pretty nearly lost it and his life with it. Old Whitetail, the Marsh Hawk had spied Danny sitting there moping on his doorstep and had come sailing over the tops of the meadow grasses so softly that he had all but caught Danny. If it hadn't been for one of the Merry Little Breezes, Danny would have been caught. And all because he was envious. It's a bad, bad habit, and Danny Meadow Mouse has learned better now.

*(The Adventures of Danny Meadow Mouse, Chapter 1)*

## STORY 64. April 22, 1912.

### Mr. Toad and Danny Meadow Mouse Take a Walk

They were a funny pair. Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun thought to himself that never had he looked down on a funnier looking pair out for a walk together. Of course, they were none other than old Mr. Toad and Danny Meadow Mouse. Old Mr. Toad, who has little cause for fear and consequently is seldom nervous, was very solemn and serious, as with stately hops he led the way up the Lone Little Path to the Green Forest. Danny Meadow Mouse, who is very, very timid, would hide under the overhanging grass until he was sure that the way was clear, then he would scamper as fast as his short legs could go to the next bunch of overhanging grass.

Now, Danny seldom goes far from home, and the farther he got, the more timid he became. A tree creaked as they passed.

“What, was that?” cried Danny, and crawled under a piece of bark. Mr. Toad laughed at him. Once there were heavy footsteps close by, and Danny, his teeth chattering with fear, scurried ahead to a hollow log. Mr. Toad laughed again, for the footsteps were made by Bossy the Cow.

A few minutes later a black shadow swept across the Lone Little Path. Danny was so frightened that he just crouched down and made himself as small as possible. He was sure that it was old Whitetail the Marsh Hawk looking for him. But it wasn't. It was simply Blacky the Crow on his way to Farmer Brown's cornfield.

Old Mr. Toad quite lost patience this time. “If I'd known you were such a 'fraid-cat I never would have invited you to take a walk, never in the world!” he exclaimed. “I've a good mind to leave you right now, Danny Meadow Mouse, and, let you find your way home as best you can.”

“Please don't, Mr. Toad: please don't!” begged Danny, a tear starting in the corner of each eye. “I really can't help it, Mr. Toad; I really can't help it.”

“Oh, yes, you can, too!” replied Mr. Toad testily. “It's the most foolish thing in the world to be so afraid of everything. Now, look at me; I go about my business and no one bothers me. Fear—bah! What is it? I don't even know what it means!” Mr. Toad filled his cheeks and his throat full of air and swelled himself up.

“Is that so?” inquired someone in a very mild voice. At the first sound old Mr

Toad collapsed. He seemed to shrink into himself until he looked as if he would rattle around in his clothes. He gasped once or twice for breath and then he started to run, and because he was trying to look behind him he did not see where he was going and fell with a great splash in a little pool of water. Danny Meadow Mouse was waiting for him on the other side. Somehow Danny felt better as he watched old Mr. Toad, dripping wet and muddy, crawl out of the water.

“My stars! My stars! That was a narrow escape!” exclaimed old Mr. Toad.

“What from?” asked Danny, hiding a grin behind his hands.

“Why, from that monster, Mr. Blacksnake?” gasped Mr. Toad, still puffing hard.

“That was only his cousin, little, slim Mr. Greensnake; he couldn’t hurt anyone!” said Danny with a chuckle.

(Reprinted as a single-story booklet by John H. Eggers.)

## STORY 65. April 23, 1912.

### Danny Meadow Mouse Learns Something

Old Mr. Toad and Danny Meadow Mouse were fairly in the Green Forest. Old Mr. Toad felt quite as much at home as on the Green Meadows, but Danny Meadow Mouse so seldom goes far from home that he felt very uneasy and out of place.

“Let’s go back home,” said Danny.

Mr. Toad looked Indignant “What! After I’ve come all this distance just for you, Danny Meadow Mouse!” he exclaimed. “No, sir! I’ve led you way up here just to show you how foolish you are to worry because your tall is short and how little reason you have to envy your cousin, Whitefoot. There he is now over on that hollow log, and we’ll soon find out what he thinks about a long tail.”

Danny looked, and there sure enough was his cousin, Whitefoot. Danny’s heart was once more filled with envy. Whitefoot certainly was handsome. He wore the most beautiful coat of bright fawn color and a waistcoat of the purest white. His eyes were big and black and soft. He was slim and trim and handsome. But the thing that Danny noticed first, and from which he could hardly take his eyes long enough to be polite, was a long, slim tail. How Danny did envy Whitefoot that tail! Danny felt like tucking his own stubby little tail under him and sitting down on it, only it was hardly long enough even for that.

Whitefoot invited Danny up on the log to eat some berries which he had gathered, and Danny, who was very hungry after his long walk, was very glad to accept. Pretty soon he noticed that Whitefoot kept looking at his long tail and that he moved it very carefully. Old Mr. Toad noticed it, too.

“Seems to me you think a lot of that tail of yours. I should think it would be a dreadful bother,” said he.

Whitefoot curled his tail around him and sighed. “It is,” said he. “Sometimes I

wish I hadn't any tail at all."

Danny Meadow Mouse pricked up his ears. He couldn't believe that he heard aright. Here he was wishing with all his heart that his own tail was long and slim, and here was his cousin, Whitefoot, wishing that he hadn't any tail at all!

"Wha-what do you mean?" gasped Danny Meadow Mouse.

"Look out!" shouted old Mr. Toad excitedly.

There was a swish of great wings. Danny dived head first under a big piece of bark, for he had had a terrifying glimpse of fierce Mr. Goshawk, with his great claws outstretched. At the same time Whitefoot had scrambled into a hole in the log he was sitting on.

By and by Danny heard old Mr. Toad calling. "Is it safe to come out?" called Danny in a low voice. Mr. Toad told him that it was, and after a while Danny got his courage up to, the point of crawling from under the place of bark. It was some time before they could induce his cousin, Whitefoot, to come out of the hollow log. When he did, Danny saw that there were tears in his eyes.

"What is it?" asked Danny.

Whitefoot pointed to his tail, Danny looked, Whitefoot's long, slim tail was scratched and bleeding.

"That's what I meant," said Whitefoot, "when I said that I wished I hadn't any tail. You see, I got into the hollow log, but I didn't have time to pull my long tail in before Mr. Goshawk's claws struck it."

On their way home that night Danny Meadow Mouse was very sober. When they reached his doorstep, he bade old Mr. Toad good night. Mr. Toad hopped off down the Lone Little Path. In a few minutes he heard Danny calling.

"I've learned something. Mr. Toad," said Danny Meadow Mouse. "I guess my tail is plenty long enough for me. Mr. Toad smiled and said nothing.

(Reprinted as a single-story booklet by John H. Eggers.)

## STORY 66. April 24, 1912.

### Whitefoot Grows Suspicious

Whitefoot the Wood Mouse sat thoughtfully pulling his whiskers. Once or twice he looked behind him uneasily. Very carefully he studied the little wee, wee path that led up to the hollow log, where he was making his home at present. Someone had been over that path since he went out for his usual morning walk. He was sure of it. He peeped in at his doorway and sniffed. Someone had been in there, too.

"Hello, Whitefoot!" shouted Striped Chipmunk, coming up behind him on tiptoe.

Whitefoot jumped so that he lost his balance and toppled off his doorstep.

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed Striped Chipmunk. “You must have been asleep. Supposing that I had been Shadow the Weasel, what would have happened to you then?”

Whitefoot grew pale at the very thought.

“You—you don’t suppose that Shadow the Weasel is anywhere around, do you?” he whispered.

“Don’t know,” replied Striped Chipmunk, “and I don’t care. No, sir, I don’t care, for he doesn’t know where my house is. I tell you what it is, Whitefoot, there is nothing like feeling safe. It gives one a good appetite. It certainly does. You take my advice and the next time you build a house you build it where no one will suspect it is. Well, I must skip along now. Look out for Shadow the Weasel.”

Whitefoot was more uneasy than ever. He trotted along the wee, wee path, which he had made just for his own use, and looked for footprints. By and by he found one, and just for a second his heart stopped beating. It was—yes, there could be no mistake, it was the footprint of Shadow the Weasel.

Whitefoot was sure now that Shadow the Weasel had visited his house, and if he had been there once and found no one at home he certainly would come again. You see, Shadow the Weasel is a robber and worse. He is feared by all the little people of the Green Meadows and Green Forest and hated by all those who are big enough not to fear him. He is so slim and short of legs that he can slip into almost any hole that little people like Striped Chipmunk or Danny Meadow Mouse or Whitefoot can.

Whitefoot was thinking of this as he sat with his hands in his pockets<sup>20</sup> and wondered what he had best do. It certainly wouldn’t do to stay there. Shadow the Weasel might catch him asleep. With a sigh Whitefoot arose and went into his house in the hollow log. He filled his pockets with food and then he started out to look for a new home. And as he slowly traveled, he kept thinking about Striped Chipmunk’s advice. But how could he build a home so that no one would find it? A sudden noise behind him made him stop to listen. Then he ran up to the branch of a pine tree, from which he could look back to his old home. Someone was just coming out of his doorway.

It was—yes, it was Shadow the Weasel. Whitefoot waited to see no more, but ran as fast as his legs would take him.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #26)*

## STORY 67. April 25, 1912.

### Whitefoot Seeks Advice

Whitefoot the Wood Mouse was tired and frightened and homeless. Early that morning he had been frightened from his home in a hollow log by Shadow the Weasel. He had started out in the world to build a new home, and he had walked and walked and walked, but nowhere had he found a place that looked really safe. Whitefoot had not forgotten the advice of Striped Chipmunk, to build his house where no one would

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20 Anthropomorphism. Changed to “hands folded,” in reprint.

think of looking for it. But how could he find such a place?

Pretty soon Whitefoot met Johnny Chuck. "Hello!" exclaimed Johnny Chuck in surprise. "Aren't you lost, Whitefoot?"

Whitefoot shook his head. "No," said he, "I'm not lost, because I haven't any place to be lost from."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Johnny Chuck.

"I mean that my old home is no longer my home, for Shadow the Weasel has found it, and I do not dare to go back there. So now I am looking for a place to build a new home. Oh, Johnny Chuck, do you know of any place where no one would think of looking for a home of mine?"

Johnny scratched his head and thought very hard, very hard, indeed, for Johnny Chuck is a very obliging little fellow. "No," he said, slowly, "I don't believe I do. I tell you what, let's go over and see Grandfather Frog. He is so old and wise that he is sure to know."

Whitefoot agreed, so off they started for the Smiling Pool. Whitefoot had never been there before, and he kept close to Johnny Chuck's coattails all the way there. They found Grandfather Frog sitting on his big, green lily-pod just as usual. He heard them coming through the bulrushes.

"Hello, Johnny Chuck! What brings you down here today?" asked Grandfather Frog.

Johnny Chuck explained Whitefoot's difficulty. Grandfather Frog listened very attentively.

"Now what would you do?" concluded Johnny Chuck.

"Chugarum! How should I know?" replied Grandfather Frog, in his deepest and gruffest voice. But all the time there was a twinkle in his big goggly eyes as he watched Whitefoot's face fall.

Just then a foolish green fly came within reach of Grandfather Frog. His big mouth opened wide, the fly disappeared, and Grandfather Frog patted his white and yellow waistcoat as if something inside felt very nice, indeed.

"It seems to me that if I was in the habit of living in hollow trees or logs and wanted to make a new home where no one would think to look for it, I'd hunt up some old house that is supposed to be deserted and I'd move in and not let anyone know that I was living there," said Grandfather Frog, and as he spoke his eyes were fastened on one of Mrs. Redwing's old nests in the rushes.

Whitefoot saw the nest and a great idea came to him. "Thank you, thank you, Grandfather Frog!" he cried. "I'm going to do just that thing."

*(Bedtime Story Calendar # 27)*

## STORY 68. April 26, 1912.

### The Sky Parlor of Whitefoot the Wood Mouse

Whitefoot the Wood Mouse chuckled to himself as he ran up a low alder and examined an old nest that had once belonged to Mrs. Redwing, before she had moved over the bulrushes on the edge of the Smiling Pool. He had seen that old nest times without number, but he had never given it a thought until Grandfather Frog had said that if he was looking for a new home where no one would think to look for him he would move into the deserted house of someone else.

Now, Whitefoot had always lived in a hollow tree or a hollow log, and everyone knew it. So when Shadow the Weasel, who is a robber and worse, had started out to look for Whitefoot he had first examined all hollows in trees and every hollow log that he found. He had found Whitefoot's house while Whitefoot was out, and then the latter did not dare go home again. So Whitefoot had started out to build a new home.

Whitefoot picked some bits of stick and old dried leaves out of Mrs. Redwing's old nest. Then he curled himself up in a ball in the bottom just to see how it would feel. The Merry Little Breezes came along and saw him there. They didn't know that he was thinking of living there; they thought he had climbed up there just for fun. Gently they rocked the alder to and fro. In a few minutes. Whitefoot was fast asleep.

When he awoke, he couldn't think where he was. He was in a lovely soft bed and he was very, very comfortable. Suddenly he remembered. Once more he chuckled to himself: "This suits me," said he. "It is my sky parlor. Who will ever think of looking in a deserted nest of Mrs. Redwing for Whitefoot the Wood Mouse? I'll just put a roof on this and then I'll have the safest, cosiest, snuggest house in the Green Forest."

Whitefoot peeped over the edge of the nest. When he was sure that no one was looking he scampered down to the ground. Then he became very busy. What do you think he was doing? Why, he was collecting soft, dry grass and the lining from strips of bark and little sticks and leaves. It took him all day, and just as Old Mother West Wind started for home behind the purple hills Whitefoot sat down to eat his supper of berries and to rest. Hidden under the broad leaf of skunk cabbage plant was his pile of grass and bark and sticks and leaves.

When all the little meadow people and forest folk who play by day had gone to bed Whitefoot climbed the alder once more, and this time he took up with him the grass he had gathered. Up and, down, up and down the alder all night long ran Whitefoot. When jolly, round red Mr. Sun threw off his nightcap the next morning and started to climb up in the blue sky he looked down on the alder and smiled. Mrs. Redwing's old nest was still there, but it had a roof, and still it looked like nothing but an old nest.

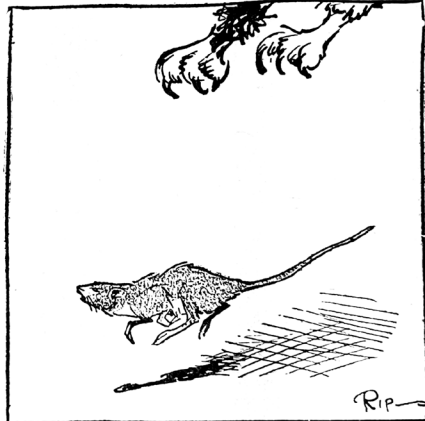
And inside, in the softest of beds was a little, round ball of soft fur fast asleep. It was Whitefoot the Wood Mouse in his new sky parlor.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #28)*

Illustrations. April 22 to April 26, 1912.



64. Mr. Toad and Danny Meadow Mouse Take a Walk



65. Danny Meadow Mouse Learns Something



66. Whitefoot Grows Suspicious



67. Whitefoot Seeks Advice



68. The Sky Parlor of Whitefoot the Wood Mouse



## STORY 69. April 29, 1912.

### Shadow the Weasel Goes Hunting

While Whitefoot the Wood Mouse was busy building a new home out of Mrs. Redwing's old home in the alder, Shadow the Weasel was hunting through all the Green Forest. He was looking for Whitefoot, for Shadow had made up his mind that he wanted a fat little Wood Mouse for dinner. He had found Whitefoot's old house, and his sharp little nose told him that Whitefoot had not been gone long.

"Probably he is out for a morning walk," thought Shadow. "I will look around and see what else I can find and then I'll come back and—"

Shadow did not say what he would do, but he licked his lips and smiled wickedly. You see, Shadow is such an active, uneasy fellow that he could not sit down and wait for Whitefoot to return. When finally Whitefoot did return he saw Shadow's footprints and, stopping just long enough to put some food in his pockets, he started out to find a new home.

Now Shadow the Weasel is very quick to think and to move, and he is a robber, a very fierce robber. All the little meadow people and forest folk hate him and most of them fear him. When Shadow returned to Whitefoot's house he knew right away that Whitefoot had been back, and when he saw some food spilled on the floor where Whitefoot had hurried to fill his pockets, he guessed right away that the Wood Mouse had run away to find a new home.

"I'll get him!" said Shadow with a snarl, and putting his nose to the ground, he started to follow in Whitefoot's steps. Now Shadow has almost as wonderful a nose as Bowser the Hound, and he had no trouble at all in following Whitefoot's every twist and turn. His little eyes grew red and savage. "I'll have him!" he would mutter every few minutes.

By and by Shadow stopped. He was puzzled. Whitefoot's trail had suddenly disappeared. Instead, here was the trail of Johnny Chuck. What did it mean? Shadow ran around in a circle, but nowhere could he find a trace of Whitefoot after the latter's track joined that of Johnny Chuck. Shadow's eyes grew redder than ever with rage. For a while he ran harder than ever along Johnny Chuck's trail, but found no trace of Whitefoot. Then he gave it up, for he had no desire to meet Johnny Chuck.

Shadow had spent the best part of the day trying to find Whitefoot the Wood Mouse. He was hungry and tired and so cross that he talked to himself as he ran this way and that in search of something to eat. "I'll catch that Wood Mouse if I have to look in every hollow log and every hollow tree in the Green Forest!" said he. As he said it, he was running under an alder, and right over his head was an old nest of Mrs. Redwing's. Over the edge of it peeped two bright little eyes and watched Shadow the Weasel out of sight. "Go ahead and look in all the hollow trees and hollow logs; it will keep you out of mischief," said Whitefoot, snuggling down in his new home, which

had once been Mrs. Redwing's. "My, but I'm glad that Johnny Chuck's footsteps covered mine all up!"

*(Bedtime Story Calendar # 29)*

## STORY 70. April 30, 1912.

### Shadow the Weasel Makes a Mistake

Shadow the Weasel was true to his name. He stole through the Green Forest so swiftly and so quietly that he hardly seemed more real than a shadow. All the little meadow people and forest folk who saw him fled as fast as they could go, for they were afraid. Shadow the Weasel is a bold, bad robber, very bad indeed, and no one loves him. But Shadow doesn't care. No, sir, Shadow doesn't care the tiniest little bit. He doesn't want to be loved. So he stole through the Green Forest and not so much as a single leaf rustled. From tree to tree and log to log he stole, peeping from behind each in the hope that he might find someone on the other side. Then Sammy Jay saw him.

Now because Sammy Jay can fly, he has no fear of Shadow the Weasel, but he has no love for Shadow. So at once he began to fly along just over Shadow and scream at the top of his lungs: "Thief! Thief! Thief!"

Shadow looked up and snarled at Sammy Jay. "Keep still, can't you?" he asked fiercely. Sammy Jay kept right on calling louder than ever.

Sammy Jay is a thief himself, and everybody knows it. Perhaps that is the reason that he delights in calling someone else a thief. Anyway, he kept it up until Shadow was compelled to hide in a hollow log. Sammy Jay hung around until he grew tired. Then he flew off and once more Shadow came out to hunt for something to eat. Of course, it was of no use to hunt around there after Sammy Jay's warning to all the little forest folk, so he hurried over to the Laughing Brook.

Pretty soon he smelled something that made his mouth water. He sniffed and sniffed again. It was fish. "All I've got to do is to follow my nose," said Shadow to himself and smiled as he thought of the feast he would have.

"Must be that someone has had more fish than they wanted and has left some. How fortunate for me!" thought Shadow, as he followed his nose.

Pretty soon his nose brought him to somebody's storehouse. Shadow's hopes fell. He didn't need to be told whose storehouse it was. He knew. It was the storehouse of his cousin, Billy Mink.

For just a minute Shadow hesitated. He looked this way and looked that way. No one was in sight. Shadow began to dig. How he made the leaves and dirt fly! In a few minutes he had uncovered three nice trout which Billy Mink had put there that morning. Shadow pulled one out. Before he began to eat he once more looked all around. No one was in sight. Of course, he could run away with this one but then he would have to leave the others. No, he would eat first and then take away one of the others.

My, how good that trout did taste! Shadow forgot all about everything else. He just stuffed himself greedily. And then he heard a noise just behind him. He whirled like a flash, and there was his big cousin, Billy Mink, and the look on Billy's face wasn't pleasant to see.

"What are you doing with my fish?" demanded Billy Mink.

"Are they your fish? I didn't know it. I found them here and thought someone had dropped them," said Shadow the Weasel, and tried to smile.

"Well, you made a mistake," said Billy Mink, grimly.

And then things happened that made the leaves and the dirt and the fur fly. In a few minutes Shadow limped off as fast as he could.

"I made a mistake," he sobbed.

## STORY 71. May 1, 1912

### Who Stole the Eggs of Mrs. Grouse?

There was great excitement in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows. The Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind brought the news. They got it from Mrs. Grouse herself. They had found her very early that morning almost distracted with grief. She had lost her eggs. Yes, sir, someone had stolen all her eggs, 15 of them, and she was in despair. She knew that they were stolen by someone who lived in the Green Forest and not by Farmer Brown's boy, because he had not been in the Green Forest that afternoon. She had left the nest for only a few minutes so that she might get the cramps out of her legs. When she came back not an egg was to be seen.

Peter Rabbit hurried up to call on Mrs. Grouse as soon as he heard the news. She told the dreadful story all over again and Peter was so sympathetic that when she cried, he cried a little, too. Now Peter is sharp-eyed, and all the time he was listening to Mrs. Grouse he was examining everything in sight. What he saw he kept to himself. Pretty soon he excused himself and started down to Johnny Chuck's house. He found Johnny Chuck very busy making a new path.

"Hello, Johnny Chuck! Have you heard about the eggs of Mrs. Grouse?" asked Peter.

"Sure," said Johnny Chuck. "The Merry Little Breezes were so full of it that they couldn't talk of anything else this morning. Who do you suppose did it?"

"I don't suppose; I know," replied Peter Rabbit.

Johnny Chuck grinned. "Look out, Peter, you'll know too much someday," said he, for Peter is famous for thinking that he knows everything.

"I tell you I do know!" exclaimed Peter indignantly.

"You mean you think you know," replied Johnny Chuck.

"No such thing! I tell you I know who stole those eggs!" Peter fairly shouted.

“Did you see the thief?” asked Johnny Chuck.

“No,” replied Peter.

“Or the stolen eggs?” asked Johnny.

“No,” replied Peter.

“Then how do you know who stole them?” demanded Johnny.

“Because I found his tracks, that’s how!” said Peter.

“Well, who do you think the thief is?” asked Johnny.

Peter tiptoed up and whispered in one of Johnny’s ears.

“I don’t believe it!” said Johnny Chuck. “Jimmy Skunk wouldn’t do such a mean trick as that.”

“I tell you I saw his tracks right around the nest,” replied Peter.

“I don’t care if you did, he never—”

Johnny Chuck didn’t finish, for there coming down the Lone Little Path was Jimmy Skunk himself, and on the front of his coat was a yellow stain. It certainly looked very much like egg.

*(Mother West Wind’s Neighbors, Chapter 10, “Who Stole the Eggs of Mrs. Grouse?”)*

## STORY 72. May 2, 1912.

### Jimmy Skunk in Disgrace.

Jimmy Skunk was in disgrace. He was suspected of having stolen all the eggs of Mrs. Grouse. Someone had stolen them, and Jimmy Skunk’s tracks had been found around the nest. Then the very day the eggs were stolen Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck had seen egg stain on the front of Jimmy Skunk’s coat.

At first Jimmy Skunk didn’t know what the trouble was. When he met Peter Rabbit, Peter turned his back to him. When he met Johnny Chuck, Johnny didn’t see him. When he met Sammy Jay, Sammy yelled at the top of his lungs: “Thief! Thief! Thief!” It took Jimmy a long time to get it through his head that they really thought him a thief, and when he did realize it he didn’t know what they thought he had stolen. He couldn’t very well ask, for no one would speak to him.

Jimmy Skunk lost his appetite. A beetle could run right under Jimmy’s nose and he would never know it. The more he worried the thinner he grew. And he grew cross and short-tempered. Why, even little Danny Meadow Mouse turned up his nose when Jimmy passed, and Jimmy knew it.

Jimmy’s thoughts were anything but pleasant thoughts as one day he started down

the Crooked Little Path to the Green Meadows. Jimmy is naturally a lazy, good-natured, happy little fellow and ready to make friends with anyone. This treatment he was receiving was more than he could bear. "If I only knew what it is all about!" he muttered to himself.

Just then he heard some voices over behind a bush and he thought he heard his own name. He stopped to listen. Of course, this wasn't a nice thing to do, but when Jimmy heard his own name he just had to try to hear more.

"I tell you I saw his tracks all around the nest of Mrs. Grouse, and saw egg stain on the front of his coat." It was Peter Rabbit who was speaking.

A great light broke over Jimmy Skunk. So that was what the matter was and why they turned their backs upon him and called him a thief! They thought that he was the one who had stolen the eggs of Mrs. Grouse! What right had they to think it? Jimmy grew indignant. Then he thought of what he had heard Peter Rabbit say. Jimmy gave a long whistle and sat down to think.

It certainly did look bad. He had been around the nest the very day that the eggs were stolen. He remembered looking for beetles under an old log right back of where Mrs. Grouse had been sitting. And he had spilled egg on his coat and then had been in such a hurry to get home that he had not taken time to wash it off. But that egg came from Farmer Brown's henhouse.

"I guess I don't blame them much after all," said Jimmy, as he thought it all over. "And I guess that the only way I can prove that it wasn't true is to find out who it was."

(*Mother West Wind's Neighbors*, Chapter 10, "Who Stole the Eggs of Mrs. Grouse?")

## STORY 73. May 3, 1912.

### Jimmy Skunk Plays Policeman

Jimmy Skunk had accidentally found out that he was suspected of having stolen all the eggs from Mrs. Grouse. For that reason, no one would speak to him or have anything to do with him. If people think you have done wrong, they make it just as uncomfortable as if you had done wrong. It was so in Jimmy Skunk's case. No one would have anything to do with him. Why, they wouldn't even speak to him if they could help it!

But now that Jimmy knew what the trouble was, he made up his mind that he would just turn policeman and find out who really did steal the eggs. Now everybody knows that Jimmy Skunk is extremely fond of eggs, and this is one reason why he was suspected. Jimmy put his hands in his pockets and sat down to think it over.

"Peter Rabbit doesn't eat eggs and neither does Johnny Chuck," said Jimmy. "Danny Meadow Mouse might eat a wee, wee one, but he never could have stolen all those of Mrs. Grouse. Goodness, no!" Jimmy laughed at the thought. "Striped Chipmunk couldn't have done it and Chatterer the Red Squirrel couldn't have kept still about it. It might have been Billy Mink, or—" Jimmy Skunk drew a long breath and

then he sprang to his feet. "I believe that that is just who it is!" he exclaimed.

Now, Jimmy Skunk naturally is lazy, but this time he acted promptly. He brushed his coat carefully and made himself as fine as he could. Then he started out to make some calls. He first stopped at Johnny Chuck's house, but Johnny had seen him coming and when Jimmy knocked Johnny pretended that he wasn't at home. Jimmy grinned and went on. At almost every house he had the same experience. When he had called or tried to call on most of the little people of the Green Meadow and the Green Forest, he had made up his mind that none of these was the thief, for it was plain to see that they all held him guilty. Jimmy was very well satisfied with the results of his calls. He chuckled to himself as he thought over the way he had been received. "Well, any way I know who it wasn't and that is something; now to find out who it was!" said he as he started for the Laughing Brook.

Coming down the Laughing Brook from the Smiling Pool he met Billy Mink. Billy had a fat trout which he was taking home. He laid it down to say "howdy" to Jimmy Skunk, for Billy Mink is so often in mischief that he cannot afford to turn his back on others. Besides he is a sort of second cousin of Jimmy Skunk.

"Howdy," said Jimmy Skunk. "I suppose that your storehouse is full of fat trout, Billy Mink."

Billy scowled. "It was," he replied, "but that thieving relative of ours, Shadow the Weasel, stole from it yesterday. I caught him and I guess he wishes now that he hadn't. He isn't smart enough to catch his own fish so he steals from his own relatives."

"I thought Shadow the Weasel had gone on a long journey," said Jimmy.

"He's been back a week," replied Billy shortly. "Well, I must be going; good-by."

"Good-by," replied Jimmy Skunk, and with a light heart he started back for the Crooked Little Path up the hill, for he had found out what he wanted to know—Shadow the Weasel was back in the Green Forest.

(*Mother West Wind's Neighbors*, Chapter 10, "Who Stole the Eggs of Mrs. Grouse?")

## STORY 74. May 4, 1912.

### Jimmy Skunk Wins Back his Good Name

Jimmy Skunk sat at the top of the Crooked Little Path and watched Old Mother West Wind gather her Merry Little Breezes into the big bag in which she would carry them to her home behind the Purple Hills. As he watched Jimmy would sometimes look over toward Farmer Brown's and chuckle. He was waiting for the black shadows to creep out from the Purple Hills.

By and by he saw them coming, creeping slowly, slowly out across the Green Meadows and up the Crooked Little Path to his very feet. When it had grown quite dark, Jimmy Skunk arose and started for Farmer Brown's henhouse. He knew of a hole by which he could get in without any trouble. He could hear the sleepy chatter of the

hens as they settled themselves more comfortably on the roosts. Jimmy waited. He wanted to be sure that all were asleep before he ventured in.

Soon all was still. Very cautiously Jimmy Skunk crept inside. He knew just where every nest was, for he had been there many times before. In the second one he looked into was a nice brown egg. It made Jimmy's mouth water, for Jimmy is very fond of eggs. But he closed his lips tightly and picked up the egg. Then he crept out of the henhouse and hurried, actually hurried, which is something very unusual for Jimmy Skunk, over to the Green Forest, where he hid the egg in a hollow stump. Then, back he hurried for another egg. Three times he made the trip to Farmer Brown's henhouse and each time he brought back an egg to put in the hollow stump.

By this time Jimmy Skunk was tired. But he couldn't stop to rest now. Down to the Laughing Brook he hurried and there he found Billy Mink.

"Hi, Billy Mink, I want a fish!" said Jimmy Skunk.

Billy Mink laughed. "Catch it, then!" he cried.

"Come here: I want to whisper something," replied Jimmy Skunk.

Billy Mink came over and listened. Then he grinned. "All right," said he, "I'll do anything to get even with Shadow the Weasel, who stole my trout."

So presently Billy Mink, who is a famous fisherman, brought Jimmy Skunk a fat fish and Jimmy thanked him. Then he dragged it up through the Green Forest and finally put it in the hollow stump with the eggs. When he had done this, he hurried off to find Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck, for it was then just the beginning of the morning. It was hard work, but he finally got them to come up and hide with him near the hollow stump.

They had been there but a little while when they heard a rustling of the leaves. Jimmy reached over and poked Peter Rabbit. There was Shadow the Weasel running with his nose to the ground and following the smell of fish where Jimmy Skunk had dragged the trout that Billy Mink had given him.

Straight up to the hollow stump went Shadow the Weasel. He peeped inside. Then he looked all around to see if anyone was watching. He didn't see Jimmy Skunk and Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck.

"My!" exclaimed Shadow the Weasel. "These are better than the eggs of Mrs. Grouse!" and he disappeared in the hollow stump.

Peter Rabbit looked at Jimmy Skunk, Then he held out a hand. "I'm sorry, Jimmy Skunk, that I ever thought that it was you who stole the eggs of Mrs. Grouse. Now I'm going to hurry to tell everyone on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest who it really was."

And Peter was as good as his word, so that everyone hurried to tell Jimmy Skunk how much they thought of him.

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 10, "Who Stole the Eggs of Mrs. Grouse?")*

STORY 75. May 6, 1912.

## Another Stranger in the Green Forest

It was true! There was another stranger in the Green Forest. Where he came from or who he was no one knew. The Merry Little Breezes had discovered him. When they had found him, he had been very industriously examining a hollow tree just as if he meant to stay. The Merry Little Breezes watched him for a few minutes then hurried off to spread the news, for such news as this would arouse the interest and curiosity of all the little meadow people and forest folk. Peter Rabbit was the first they met and Peter listened gravely as, all talking at once, they told him about the stranger.

When the Merry Little Breezes had hurried on Peter started for the Green Forest. Peter went on tiptoe as he approached the hollow tree. He wanted to see the stranger before the stranger saw him. No one was in sight. Peter sat down behind a stump and waited. Pretty soon a funny face was poked out of the hollow tree. Peter had to clap his hands over his mouth to keep from laughing right out. It was the face of a little old man, a sharp little face with a sharp little nose that looked as if it might poke into anybody's business.

The stranger looked this way and that way. Then he came out of the hollow where Peter could have a good look at him. He wore a suit of grayish white, a rough tumbled suit of which he seemed to take no care at all. He wore black gloves and black stockings, through which his white fingers and toes showed. And he had a long tail, a tail that looked like the long tails of the Rat family only it was much larger. Altogether the stranger looked quite innocent and harmless, and Peter decided to make himself known.

“Good morning,” said Peter, stepping out from behind the stump.

The stranger looked down at him and grinned. “Mornin’, sah,” said he.

“May I ask where you come from and how long you are going to stay?” asked Peter Rabbit in his most polite manner, and Peter can be very polite when he wants to be.

The stranger showed all his teeth again in another grin. “Yo’ may,” he replied. “Ah reckons yo’ all don’ know me. Ah comes from Ol’ Virginy, and this place is so right like mah ol’ home, Ah reckon Ah’ll stay. Some folks calls me Ol’ Bill Possum, but most folks calls me Unc’ Billy.”

“I’m pleased to know you, Uncle Billy, and I hope you’ll like the Green Forest and the Green Meadows,” said Peter.

Unc’ Billy Possum chuckled: “Ah’s right sho’ Ah shall,” he replied. Then he leaned over and very slowly winked at Peter Rabbit. “Can you tell me, sah, if any poultry are permanent residents hereabouts?” he asked.

Peter looked a trifle puzzled. “If you are asking about hens,” replied he, “Farmer Brown has some very fine ones over beyond the Green Meadows.”



Unc' Billy winked again. "Ah'm right sho' Ah'll stay," said he.

(*Mother West Wind's Neighbors*, Chapter 2, "Unc' Billy Possum Arrives.")

## STORY 76. May 7, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Entertains

Peter Rabbit and the Merry Little Breezes soon had the news that there was a stranger in the Green Forest spread not only all through the Green Forest itself, but all over the Green Meadows as well. Of course, everybody soon found some excuse to visit the hollow tree where Unc' Billy Possum had decided to make his home.

Unc' Billy was tired after his long journey, and was fast asleep inside the hollow tree when the first of the callers arrived, so they sat down around the foot of the tree to wait. Every few minutes there would arrive another visitor. Each would appear very much surprised to find the others there, and would look a little foolish. No one would admit that he had come with a purpose, but each pretended that it was merely chance that had brought him that way. But no one seemed to have business important enough to take him away, and pretty soon nearly all the little people of the Green Forest and Green Meadows were seated at the foot of the hollow tree.

Finally Johnny Chuck grew tired of waiting. "I begin to believe that we have been fooled and that there isn't any stranger here at all," said he.

"There is too, for I talked with him," said Peter Rabbit indignantly.

"If you know him why don't you call him out so we can all meet him?" asked Jimmy Skunk.

"I-I-I don't think it would be polite," replied Peter Rabbit. But this wasn't the real reason. Down in his heart Peter was just a wee bit afraid. You see he didn't know as the stranger would like it and Peter had looked up at some very sharp teeth when Unc' Billy Possum had grinned down on him that morning.

"Let's send Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, up to look in and see if there is anyone in the hollow tree," said Reddy Fox.

"No, you don't Reddy Fox!" shouted Chatterer, who is quick tempered and a terrible scold, and he began to call Reddy names in such a shrill voice that he waked up Unc' Billy.

Very slowly Unc' Billy Possum climbed out of the hollow to a limb, where all could see him. He looked down and then he grinned until he showed all his white teeth.

"How do yo' alls do?" asked Unc' Billy Possum. "'Pears to me that yo' alls are right smart interested in mah ol' hollow tree."

"It isn't the hollow tree; it's yourself, Uncle Billy," explained Peter Rabbit. "These are your neighbors come to make a call."

Unc' Billy grinned again. "Ah sutt'nly feel honored. Ah think Ah will come down

and shake hands,” said he.

Danny Meadow Mouse looked at Unc’ Billy’s white teeth and remembered that he couldn’t stop any longer. So did Striped Chipmunk and Whitefoot the Wood Mouse. In fact, by the time Unc’ Billy reached the ground there was no one there but Reddy Fox. But as they left each had promised to call again.

Unc’ Billy grinned at Reddy Fox and showed all his teeth once more. “I’m pleased to meet you, Mr. Possum,” said Reddy, respectfully, which wasn’t at all what he had meant to say, and then he started off to tell Granny Fox all about it.

*(Mother West Wind’s Neighbors, Chapter 2, “Unc’ Billy Possum Arrives.”)*

## STORY 77. May 8, 1912.

### “Unc” Billy Possum and Jimmy Skunk Meet Unexpectedly

Jimmy Skunk was hungry. There was no doubt about it. He couldn’t think about anything but the emptiness of his stomach. Jimmy sat down and gently rubbed his stomach as he tried to decide what would taste best for his supper. “Let me see,” said Jimmy. “I had beetles for breakfast and grasshoppers for dinner, and now for supper I want a change—what shall it be?”

Just then a sleepy “cock-a-doodle-doo” sounded from way over toward Farmer Brown’s. Jimmy Skunk rubbed his stomach again and chuckled softly, “It’s an egg I want; it certainly is an egg; maybe two, perhaps three.”

The black shadows crept out from the Purple Hills across the Green Meadows. Jimmy watched them impatiently. How slow they were! He did wish they would hurry. With every little minute he grew hungrier. It wouldn’t do to go up to Farmer Brown’s henhouse, until it was so dark that Farmer Brown’s boy would have gone into the house.

Slowly the shadows crept up toward the henhouse until finally it was all in darkness. Softly Jimmy Skunk crept up to the hole of which he knew. Just outside he sat down and listened for a few minutes. He could hear the two biddies clucking sleepily. When all was still Jimmy Skunk crept inside, and if you had been there to see, you would have found him wearing his broadest smile, for, I am sorry to say, Jimmy Skunk felt quite at home in Farmer Brown’s henhouse.

“Let me see; old Mrs. Speckles lays the largest eggs and young Mrs. Topknot lays the sweetest eggs, and old Mrs. Featherlegs lays the most beautiful eggs. I think I’ll try Mrs. Topknot’s first,” said Jimmy to himself.

He went straight to Mrs. Topknot’s nest and reached in. It was empty! Jimmy made a wry face and hurried over to the nest of Mrs. Speckles. Not an egg could he feel! Jimmy’s heart sank. Could it be that Farmer Brown’s boy had gathered the eggs before dark? It must be, though he usually gathered them in the morning. Jimmy fairly rushed

over to the nest of Mrs. Featherlegs. Ha! What was that? It was an egg! Jimmy reached in with both hands to take it out. How queer and light it felt! Jimmy's fingers slipped around one end. There was a hole there! Jimmy was holding nothing but an empty shell.

Then Jimmy Skunk knew that it was not Farmer Brown's boy who had been before him, but someone who likes eggs as well as Jimmy does. For a minute Jimmy lost his temper and ground his teeth, he was so angry.

"It must be that glutton, Shadow the Weasel" he muttered as he began to search in all the other nests within reach. Not an egg was to be found. Now there were a lot of nests that Jimmy couldn't reach, for he is not a climber. He was looking up at these hungrily when he noticed something from one of them. He reached up and gave it a sharp pull. Down, right on top of Jimmy Skunk tumbled Unc' Billy Possum with a big egg in his hands.

Jimmy was so startled that he started to run. Then he turned to look back. There lay Unc' Billy flat on his back, grinning and trying to get his breath.

"Good evening, sah. These are monstrous fine eggs yo'all have so convenient, sah," said Unc' Billy Possum.

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 2, "Unc' Billy Possum Arrives.")*

## STORY 78. May 9, 1912.

### A Queer Partnership

When Jimmy Skunk found that it was Unc' Possum who had been before him in Farmer Brown's hen house and stolen all the eggs within reach from the ground he was mad. Yes, sir, Jimmy Skunk was mad. Of course he had no business to be. No, indeed. The eggs didn't belong to Jimmy; they belonged to Farmer Brown. But Jimmy had become so used to helping himself in Farmer Brown's hen house that when he found someone else doing the same thing he straightaway lost his temper.

"What are you doing here?" he had demanded of Unc' Billy Possum, who had fallen on his back and lay grinning at him.

"Enjoying mahself most amazingly, sah," replied Unc' Billy, patting a freshly laid egg which he was holding.

"You've got no business here!" said Jimmy, fiercely, for the sight of that egg Unc' Billy was holding so tightly made his stomach feel emptier than ever, and that was very empty indeed.

"Ah beg yo' pardon, but may Ah ask what business brings yo' here?" asked Unc' Billy, and his grin grew broader than ever.

"I-I-I—Jimmy didn't know just what to say.

Unc' Billy chuckled. "Ah guess yo' business and mah business in this hen house

would amount to the same thing. If we were to ask Farmer Brown, and he would say that we hadn't any business here at all," said he. Then he rolled the egg he was holding over to Jimmy Skunk. "Ah done eat all Ah can hold so Ah takes pleasure in making this contribution to yo'," and once more Unc' Billy grinned.

At first Jimmy Skunk thought he would refuse the egg. But Jimmy is very fair-minded. He knew perfectly well that Unc' Billy Possum had just as much right to those eggs as he had, and that neither of them had any right to them at all. But then Jimmy couldn't see that Farmer Brown or his boy had any right to them either. They really belonged to Mrs. Topknot and Mrs. Speckles and Mrs. Featherlegs. So when Unc' Billy rolled the egg over to him Jimmy allowed his temper to gradually cook off. There wasn't another egg within reach, for Jimmy had searched in every nest he could look into. This egg certainly did look good. Jimmy suddenly held out his hand to Unc' Billy.

"You are right, Uncle Billy," said he. "I guess you have just as much business here as I have. You certainly have the advantage of me because you can climb while I cannot. I'm much obliged to you for this egg because without it I should go hungry."

In a flash Unc' Billy Possum was on his feet and two seconds later he was scrambling up to the top row of nests. He was down again with another egg by the time Jimmy had finished the first one. He presented it to Jimmy with a low and very polite bow.

"Ah have the honor to propose that we become partners, sah, and that in honor of the new firm of Skunk & Possum we each eat another egg," said Unc' Billy, his eyes twinkling. And they did.

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 2, "Unc' Billy Possum Arrives.")*

## STORY 79. May 10, 1912.

### Farmer Brown's Boy is Troubled

Farmer Brown's boy counted the eggs in his old straw hat and whistled. Then he grew very sober and thoughtful. He had less than half as many eggs as he had expected to get that morning. The nests of Mrs. Speckles and Mrs. Topknot and Mrs. Featherlegs had been empty. Could it be that they were laying their eggs in some secret hiding place? He took the eggs he had into the house and then came out and sat down on the doorstep to think.

His hens ought to be laying at their best right now, and yet he was getting fewer eggs than in the middle of the Winter. What could all the biddies? Slowly he got up and walked back to the henhouse. Could it be that someone was stealing his eggs? Ha! What was that? Farmer Brown's boy stooped over and picked up an empty eggshell. Then he found another, and presently another.

"A skunk or a weasel!" exclaimed Farmer Brown's boy and began to look very carefully over the floor of the henhouse. Presently he found a footprint. It was Jimmy Skunk's.

The freckled face of Farmer Brown's boy lighted up with a grin.

"So it's you is it, Mr. Skunk?" said he. "Well, I'll soon fix you!"

Now, of course, when Farmer Brown's boy said this he knew nothing about the partnership of Skunk & Possum. Perhaps if he did he wouldn't have been so sure of fixing Jimmy Skunk. First he hunted until he found the hole where Jimmy was in the habit of entering the henhouse. Just inside this he set a steel trap, very carefully covering it over with straw so that Jimmy would not see it.

"There," said he, "I guess that that will get him!" and started back for the house whistling.

The next morning he was out to the henhouse bright and early. The trap was just where he had put it, but when he collected the eggs he found fewer than ever. Farmer Brown's boy didn't know what to make of it. He hunted and hunted for another hole through which Jimmy Skunk could have crept into the henhouse, but found none. Then he got another trap and set it outside the hole where the other trap was set.

"No skunk can get in there without getting caught in one trap or the other," said he.

But the next morning he found the traps just as he had placed them, but there were not as many eggs as the day before. Then for the first time he noticed that there were no eggs in the upper nests, while he found a few in the lower nests. A skunk would take them out of the lower nests but couldn't get them from the upper nests. Farmer Brown's boy sat down on the end of the chopping log and rested his chin in his hands while he thought. What was becoming of his eggs? Who was stealing them? Ha! He had an idea. He would sit up all night and watch.

## STORY 80. May 11, 1912.

### Fun With Farmer Brown's Boy

"Hello, partner!"

"Hello, Uncle Billy!"

The speakers were Unc' Billy Possum and Jimmy Skunk. When Unc' Billy called him partner, Jimmy Skunk grinned. Uncle Billy's idea of a partnership to steal eggs in Farmer Brown's henhouse had tickled him immensely. "Skunk & Possum! Skunk & Possum!" Every time he said it he chuckled. This was their first meeting since they had become partners, and they were waiting for the black shadows to creep down from the Purple Hills.

"Ah was up to Farmer Brown's henhouse last night and what do you think Ah found?" asked Unc' Billy Possum.

"Eggs," replied Jimmy.

"Yes, sah, ah sutt'nly found eggs," said Unc' Billy, chuckling. "But Ah found more'n that, Sah! Ah sutt'nly did find more'n that!"

Jimmy began to get interested. "What did you find, Uncle Billy?" he demanded. "Ah found a trap just inside the hole where yo' usually go in," said Unc' Billy.

Jimmy Skunk grew pale. "Then what's the use of our going up there tonight?" he asked. "We can't get in.

"Don't yo' worry," replied Unc' Billy. "Yo' trust o' Bill Possum to get eggs when there are any to get."

Jimmy was doubtful, but he followed Unc' Billy. It wouldn't do any harm for to go over and see how things were for himself. It was moonlight now, which made the black shadows all the blacker, and in these the two little scamps moved carefully. Suddenly Unc' Billy caught Jimmy by a sleeve.

"Look over there by the corner of the henhouse," he whispered.

Jimmy looked and his heart came right up in his throat. There sat Farmer Brown's boy with a gun! He was watching the hole through which Jimmy had so often entered the hen-house. One look at that gun was enough for Jimmy, and he promptly started back for home. Unc' Billy Possum grabbed him by the coattails, and Jimmy couldn't make him let go.

"What kind of a partner are you 'all?" whispered Unc' Billy fiercely. "Yo' sit right down here and watch. Ah'm goin' to get those eggs!"

Jimmy Skunk felt rather ashamed, so as there was no danger there, he sat down to watch. Unc' Billy slipped away in the darkness. As he left he whispered, "Yo' keep an eye on that ol' apple tree close by the henhouse."

Jimmy did. Presently his eyes opened wide with surprise. There was Unc' Billy climbing up the tree! Then he understood and chuckled to think how smart Unc' Billy was. From the apple tree Unc' Billy could reach the roof, and from the roof he could crawl through a window left open for ventilation.

Farmer Brown's boy sat with his eyes glued on the hole through which Jimmy Skunk had so often crawled. He was bound that no one should steal eggs that night. He looked very fierce as he patted his gun. Jimmy Skunk shivered as he watched; what a long time Unc' Billy was! Why didn't he come?

Suddenly all the hens began to cackle and make a tremendous fuss. Farmer Brown's boy jumped to his feet and ran around to the door. As he opened it, Unc' Billy Possum climbed from the roof to the apple tree. A few minutes later he joined Jimmy Skunk and his pockets were full of eggs. So was his stomach. And Farmer Brown's boy gave it up and went to bed, still wondering who stole the eggs.

(Reprinted in single-story book published by John H. Eggert)

STORY 81. May 13, 1912.

## Grandfather Frog Gets a Ride

“Chugarum!” said Grandfather Frog. “I wish I had long legs, like Peter Rabbit, or could swim as fast as Little Joe Otter, I wish—”

“Why, Grandfather Frog, I am surprised! I didn’t know you ever wished for anything you haven’t got. What’s the matter now?” It was Jerry Muskrat who spoke.

Grandfather Frog hitched himself around on the big green lily-pad on which he spends each sunny day, and looked at Jerry lazily in the water.

“Jerry Muskrat,” began Grandfather Frog solemnly, “It’s a long time, a very long time, since I was young; do you know that?”

Jerry nodded.

“I’m not so spry as I used to be, and, it’s a long time since I’ve seen the world. If I was as young as you are, Jerry Muskrat, I wouldn’t be sitting here on a lily-pad all day long watching for foolish green flies. I’d—”

Grandfather Frog is old and wise.  
And views the world with bulging eyes;  
If I knew half as much as he  
I’m sure I’d quite contented be.

Grandfather Frog turned and looked over to the Big Rock where the voice came from. There sat Little Joe Otter grinning down at him.

“You’re right, Little Joe Otter. You’re Just exactly right! I’m ashamed of myself,” said Grandfather Frog.

Jerry Muskrat had an idea. “Little Joe Otter! Come down here!” he called.

Splash! Little Joe Otter was in the water. When he came to the surface, he was right alongside of Jerry, and for a few minutes they whispered and giggled. Then Jerry called to Grandfather Frog: “How would you like to take a ride around the Smiling Pool?” he asked.

“Nothing would suit me better,” replied Grandfather Frog.

Then shut your eyes and bide a wee,  
Till we have counted one, two, three.

said Jerry as he dove out of sight.

Grandfather Frog closed his eyes. Pretty soon Little Joe Otter shouted. “One, two, three.”

Grandfather Frog opened his eyes and nearly fell off the big, green lily-pad, he was so surprised. You see he was way out in the middle of the Smiling Pool! Jerry Muskrat had dived clear to the bottom of the Smiling Pool, and, with his sharp teeth, had cut the

long stem of the lily-pad, and now he and Little Joe Otter were towing it around.

Never was there such a jolly boat ride. Grandfather Frog smoothed down his white and yellow waistcoat, and in a queer, deep voice, began to sing:

A captain, sir, am I, ha! ha!  
A sailor bold and free!  
Upon my deck I stand, ha! ha!  
And sail the mighty sea!

A sudden splash close to the green lily-pad brought the song and the voyage to an abrupt end. It was made by a stone thrown by Farmer Brown's boy<sup>21</sup>.

(Reprinted in significantly edited version as *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*, Chapter 11, "Grandfather Frog's Journey" )

## STORY 82. May 14, 1912.

### Grandfather Frog Fools Farmer Brown's Boy

Farmer Brown's boy had a freckled face. He wore a battered old straw hat, and generally, when he wasn't smiling, he was whistling. He was a good-natured boy, and everybody liked him; everybody but the little people of the Green Meadows and the little folks of the Green Forest. They hated him because they were afraid of him, and they were afraid of him because he was always trying to frighten them. It wasn't because he was hard-hearted, but because he was thoughtless. That was why he had thrown the stone that spoiled Grandfather Frog's ride on the Smiling Pool.

Grandfather Frog had not forgotten this, nor how he had nearly been caught with a piece of red flannel on a hook. Grandfather Frog never forgets. He was thinking of this as he watched Farmer Brown's boy fishing for trout in the Smiling Pool. Grandfather Frog had at once warned all the little trout, so, of course, Farmer Brown's boy was having no luck at all. Grandfather Frog grinned as he watched. Then he had an idea. It tickled him so, that he laughed right out loud.

Very quietly Grandfather Frog slipped into the water, and swam over to where Jerry Muskrat was hiding in the bullrushes. He whispered to Jerry for a few minutes, and as he listened Jerry giggled. "I'll do it," said Jerry, his eyes dancing with mischief. Then Jerry disappeared under water.

Farmer Brown's boy was having no luck at all. He didn't understand it, for he could see the trout swimming around in the Smiling Pool. You see, he didn't know anything about the warning Grandfather Frog had given the trout.

"Gee. I wish I could get just one bite," muttered Farmer Brown's boy.

Just then there was such a sudden pull on his line that the pole was nearly yanked out of his hands. "Hurrah! That's a whopper!" he shouted. But his hook came up empty. There wasn't even the bait. He tried again with the same result, an empty hook.

21 This story was edited for *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends* to remove the songs and depicted as a joke on Grandfather Frog rather than a pleasant experience.



“But I catch him next time,” said Farmer Brown’s boy as he put on a new bait. But he didn’t.

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed Grandfather Frog over in the bulrushes, and every time the hook came up empty Grandfather Frog laughed.

Farmer Brown’s boy looked over to the bulrushes. “I wonder what ails that old frog,” he grunted. Then he made another cast for the big fish that bit so hard. Just as before, there was a sharp pull, but this time his hook did not come up empty. Indeed, it did not come up at all. My, how excited he got!

“It’s the king of all the trout!” he shouted, as he tugged and pulled.

Snap! His line broke. He had been pulling so hard that when the line was released he lost his balance and fell flat on his back in the water.

“Ha, ha, ha!” shouted Grandfather Frog as he watched Farmer Brown’s boy start for home, dripping water with every step.

“Ho, ho, ho,” laughed Jerry Muskrat as he crawled out on the Big Rock and dragged the missing piece of fish line after him. At the end of it was the hook fastened tight in an old log that Jerry had found on the bottom of the Smiling Pool.

“How do you like playing fish?” asked Grandfather Frog.

“It’s great fun,” replied Jerry.

And Farmer Brown’s boy still tells about the great trout he didn’t catch.

## STORY 83. May 15, 1912.

### Jerry Muskrat Has a Fright.

What was it Mother Muskrat had said about Farmer Brown’s boy and his traps? Jerry Muskrat sat on the edge of the Big Rock and kicked his heels while he tried to remember. The fact is, Jerry had not half heeded. He had been thinking of other things. Besides, it seemed to him that Mother Muskrat was altogether foolish about a great many things.

“Pooh!” said Jerry, throwing out his chest, “I guess I can take care of myself without being tied to my mother’s apron strings! What if Farmer Brown’s boy is setting traps around the Smiling Pool? I guess he can’t fool your Uncle Jerry. He isn’t so smart as he thinks he is! I can fool him any day.” Jerry chuckled. He was thinking of how he had once fooled Farmer Brown’s boy into thinking a big trout was on his hook.

Slowly Jerry slid into the Smiling Pool and swam over towards his favorite log. Peter Rabbit stuck his head over the edge of the bank. “Hi, Jerry,” he shouted, “last night I saw Farmer Brown’s boy coming over this way with a lot of traps. Better watch out.”

“Go chase yourself, Peter Rabbit. I guess I can look out for myself,” replied Jerry, just a little crossly.

Peter made a wry face and started for the sweet clover patch. Hardly was he out of sight when Billy Mink and Bobby Coon came down the Laughing Brook together. They seemed very much excited. When they saw Jerry Muskrat, they beckoned for him to come over where they were, and when he got there, they both talked at once, and it was all about Farmer Brown's boy and his traps.

"You'd better watch out, Jerry," warned Billy Mink, who is a great traveler and has had wide experience.

"Oh, I guess I'm able to take care of myself," said Jerry airily, and once more started for his favorite log. And what do you suppose he was thinking about as he swam along? He was wishing that he knew what a trap looked like, for despite his boasting he didn't even know what he was to look out for.

As he drew near his favorite log, something tickled his nose. He stopped swimming to sniff and sniff. My, how good it did smell! And it seemed to come right straight from the old log. Jerry began to swim as fast as he could. In a few minutes he scrambled out on the old log. Then Jerry rubbed his eyes three times to be sure that he saw aright. There were luscious pieces of carrot lying right in front of him.

Now there is nothing that Jerry Muskrat likes better than carrot. So he didn't stop to wonder how it got there. He just reached out for the nearest piece and ate it. Then he reached for the next piece and ate it. Then he did a funny little dance just for joy. When he was quite out of breath, he sat down to rest.

Snap! Something had Jerry Muskrat by the tail! Jerry squealed with fright and pain. Oh, how it did hurt! He twisted and turned, but he was held fast and could not see what had him. Then he pulled and pulled, until it seemed as if his tail would pull off. But it didn't. So he kept pulling, and pretty soon the thing let go so suddenly that Jerry tumbled head first into the water.

When he reached home, Mother Muskrat did his sore tail up for him. "What did I tell you about traps?" she asked severely.

Jerry stopped crying. "Was that a trap?" he asked. Then he remembered that in his fright he didn't even see it. "Oh, dear," he moaned, "I wouldn't know one today if I met it."

*(The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat, Chapter 1)*

## STORY 84. May 16, 1912.

### Mother Muskrat's Wisdom

Tied to his mother's apron strings! Tried to his mother's apron strings!" Jerry Muskrat turned his head, to see Peter Rabbit and Bobby Coon dancing on the bank as they shouted at him.

"Come right along, Jerry," said Mother Muskrat, as she swam ahead of him across the Smiling Pool. Jerry shook a fist at his tormentors on the bank and then followed

his mother, for he didn't dare disobey. Straight over to Jerry's favorite log they swam. Jerry's heart beat very fast, for it was there that that terrible unseen thing had grabbed him by the tail that morning and—yes, Jerry was afraid, even, though he was with wise old Mother Muskrat.

First she swam all around the old log. Presently she showed Jerry a shiny, snaky-looking thing which she said was a chain and at one end of which she said there was sure to be a trap. Jerry looked at it with awe. Then they climbed up on the log, and there lay a queer looking thing, like two stout jaws tightly closed. Held tightly between them were a few hairs and bits of skin. It was the very trap which had caught Jerry by the tail that morning.

“Smell of that,” said Mother Muskrat.

To tell the truth, Jerry was afraid to go near it, but he was more afraid to disobey his mother! Very gingerly he leaned forward and sniffed at it. Then he made up a face. He didn't like the smell. Mother Muskrat grinned.

“Don't like it, do you?” she asked.

“No,” said Jerry.

“Smell of it again,” commanded his mother.

“I don't want to,” replied Jerry.

“Jerry Muskrat, you do as I tell you! You take a good long smell of that trap!” said Mrs. Muskrat, stamping a foot.

Very meekly Jerry did as he was told, though the strange scent made his skin prickle all over with a strange kind of fear.

“Think you'll know it next time?” asked his mother. Jerry was sure that he would. Indeed, he was positive that he never would forget it as long as he lived.

“That's man smell,” said Mother Muskrat, kicking the trap into the water. “Whenever you get a whiff of that smell just you watch out! There's been a man or a boy around, and just as likely as not he's left a trap behind him. Did you ever find a carrot or any other things good to eat on this log before?”

Jerry confessed that he hadn't.

“Then remember that when you find unexpected good things to eat where they have never been before they mean danger! Leave them alone until after you have found the trap. Then you can eat the pieces around the trap without danger. But keep away from the trap. Now we'll eat up the rest of this carrot and then we'll go look for some more traps.”

“Tied to his mother's apron strings!” shouted Peter Rabbit as Jerry swam home close behind his mother. But somehow Jerry didn't mind. “They're pretty good things to be tied to sometimes,” said Jerry to himself as nursed he his sore tail.

## STORY 85. May 17, 1912.

### The Convention At The Big Rock

Jolly round, red Mr. Sun looked down on the Smiling Pool. He almost forgot to keep on climbing up in the blue sky, he was so interested in what he saw there.

What do you think it was? Why, it was a convention at the Big Rock, the queerest convention he ever had seen. Your papa would say that it was a mass meeting of indignant citizens. Maybe it was, but that is a pretty long term. Anyway, Mother Muskrat called it a convention, and she ought to know, for she is the one who had called it.

Of course, Jerry Muskrat was there, and his uncles and aunts and all his cousins. Billy Mink was there, and all his relations, even old Grandfather Mink, who has lost most of his teeth and is a little hard of hearing.

Little Joe Otter was there, with his father and mother and all his relations even to his third cousins. Bobby Coon was there, and he had brought with him every Coon of his acquaintance who ever fished in the Smiling Pool or along the Laughing Brook. And everybody was looking very solemn, very solemn indeed.

When the last one had arrived, Mother Muskrat climbed up on the Big Rock and called Jerry Muskrat up beside her, where all could see him. Then she made a speech:

“Friends of the Smiling Pool and Laughing Brook,” began Mrs. Muskrat, “I have called you together to show you what has happened to my son Jerry and to ask your advice.”

She stopped and pointed to Jerry’s sore tail, which was carefully wrapped in a bandage.

“What do you think did that?” she demanded.

“Probably Jerry’s been in a fight and got licked,” said Bobby Coon to his neighbor, for Bobby Coon is a graceless young scamp and does not always show proper respect to his neighbors.

Mrs. Muskrat glared at him, for she had overheard the remark. Then she held up one hand to command silence. “Friends, it was a trap—a trap set by Farmer Brown’s boy, a trap to catch you and me and our children!” said she solemnly. “It is no longer safe for our little folks to play around the Smiling Pool or along the Laughing Brook. What are we going to do about it?”

Everybody looked at everybody else in dismay. Then everybody began to talk at once, and if Farmer Brown’s boy could have heard all the things said about him, his cheeks certainly would have burned. Indeed, I am afraid that they would have blistered. Such excitement! Everybody had a different idea, and nobody would listen to anybody else. Old Mr. Mink lost his temper and called Grandpa Otter a “meddlesome know-nothing.” It looked very much as if the convention was going to break up in a

sad quarrel. Then Mr. Coon climbed up on the Big Rock and with a stick pounded for silence.

“I move,” said he, “that in as much as we cannot agree, we tell Great-Grandfather Frog all about the danger and ask his advice, for he is very old and very wise and remembers when the world was young. All in favor please raise their right hands.”

At once the air was full of hands, and everybody was good-natured once more. So it was agreed to call in Great-Grandfather Frog.

*(The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat, Chapter 2)*

## STORY 86. May 18, 1912.

### The Oracle of the Smiling Pool

Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily-pad with his eyes half closed, for all the world as if he knew nothing about the meeting at the Big Rock. Of course he did know, for there isn't much going on around the Smiling Pool which he doesn't see or at least hear all about. The Merry Little Breezes, who are here, there, and everywhere, told him all that was going on, so that when he saw Jerry Muskrat and Little Joe Otter swimming towards him, he knew what they were coming for. But he pretended to be very much surprised when Jerry Muskrat very politely said:

“Good morning, Grandfather Frog.”

“Good morning, Jerry Muskrat. You're out early this morning,” replied Grandfather Frog.

“If you please, you are wanted over at the Big Rock,” said Jerry.

Grandfather Frog's eyes twinkled, but he made his voice very deep and gruff as he replied: “Chugarum! You're a scamp, Jerry Muskrat, and Little Joe Otter is another. What trick are you trying to play on me now?”

Jerry Muskrat and Little Joe Otter looked a wee bit sheepish, for it was true that they were forever trying to play tricks on Grandfather Frog. “Really and truly, Grandfather Frog, there isn't any trick this time,” said Jerry. “There is a convention at the Big Rock to try to decide what to do to keep Farmer Brown's boy from setting traps around the Smiling Pool and along the Laughing Brook, and everybody wants your advice, because you are so old and so wise. Please come.”

Grandfather Frog smoothed down his white and yellow waistcoat and pretended to think the matter over very seriously, while Jerry and Little Joe fidgeted impatiently. Finally he spoke.

“I am very old, as you have said, Jerry Muskrat, and it is a long way over to the Big Rock.”

“Get right on my back and I'll take you over there,” said Jerry eagerly.

“I'm afraid that you'll spill me off,” replied Grandfather Frog.

“No, I won’t; just try me and see,” begged Jerry.

So Grandfather Frog climbed on Jerry Muskrat’s back, and Jerry started for the Big Rock as fast as he could go. When all the Minks and the Otters and the Coons and the Muskrats saw them coming, they gave a great shout, for Grandfather Frog is sometimes called the Oracle of the Smiling Pool. You know an Oracle is one who is very, very wise.

Bobby Coon helped Grandfather Frog up on the Big Rock, and when he had made himself comfortable, Mrs. Muskrat told him all about Farmer Brown’s boy and his traps, and how Jerry had been caught in one by the tail, and she ended by asking for his advice, because they all knew that he was so wise.

When she said this, Grandfather Frog puffed himself up until it seemed as if his white and yellow waistcoat would surely burst. He sat very still for a while and gazed straight at jolly, round, red Mr. Sun without blinking once. Then he spoke in a very deep voice.

“Tomorrow morning, at sunrise, I will tell you what to do,” said he. And not another word could they get out of him.<sup>22</sup>

*(The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat, Chapter 3)*

## STORY ?, not published in 1912.

### Grandfather Frog’s Plan

Just as Old Mother West Wind and her Merry Little Breezes came down from the Purple Hills, and jolly, round, red Mr. Sun threw his nightcap off and began his daily climb up in the blue sky, Great-Grandfather Frog climbed up on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool. Early as he was, all the little people who live along the Laughing Brook and around the Smiling Pool were waiting for him.

Bobby Coon had found two traps set by Farmer Brown’s boy, and Billy Mink had almost stepped in a third. No one felt safe anymore, yet no one knew what to do. So they all waited for the advice of Great-Grandfather Frog, who, you know, is accounted very, very wise.

Great-Grandfather Frog cleared his throat. “Chugarum!” said he. “You must find all the traps that Farmer Brown’s boy has set.”

“How are we going to do it?” asked Bobby Coon.

“By looking for them,” replied Great-Grandfather Frog tartly.

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<sup>22</sup> In the 1912 continuity, this story arc ends here, making Grandfather Frog’s character look more like a charlatan than an oracle. As mentioned previously, stories #83-86 seem to be designed to precede March 4’s “A Busy Day at the Smiling Pool,” (#25) and were assembled this way in *The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat*. That book includes an additional chapter “Grandfather Frog’s Plan,” that was not published in 1912, but would be inserted in the 1920 Associated Newspaper reruns between story #86 and #87, indicating that it might be one of the missing stories.

Bobby Coon looked foolish and slipped out of sight behind his mother. “All the coons and all the minks must search along the banks of the Laughing Brook, and all the muskrats and all the otters must search along the banks of the Smiling Pool. You must use your eyes and your noses. When you find things good to eat where you have never found them before, watch out!

When you get the first whiff of the man-smell, watch out!

Billy Mink, you are small and quick, and your eyes are sharp. You sit here on the Big Rock until you see Farmer Brown’s boy coming. Then you hide in the bulrushes where you can watch him, but where he cannot see you. Follow him everywhere he goes around the Smiling Pool or along the Laughing Brook. Without knowing it, he will show you where every trap is hidden.

“When all the traps have been found, drop a stick or a stone in each. That will spring them, and then they will be harmless. Then you can bury them deep in the mud. Don’t eat any of the food until you have sprung all of the traps, for just as likely as not you will get caught.

“Hurrah for Grandfather Frog!” shouted Little Joe Otter, turning a somersault in the water.

Everyone agreed with Little Joe Otter, and immediately they began to plan a grand hunt for the traps of Farmer Brown’s boy. The Muskrats and the Otters started to search the banks of the Smiling Pool, and the Coons and the Minks, all but Billy, started for the Laughing Brook. Billy climbed up on the Big Rock to watch, and Grandfather Frog slowly swam back to his big green lily-pad to wait for some foolish green flies for his breakfast.

Pretty soon Farmer Brown’s boy came across the Green Meadows toward the Smiling Pool. Billy Mink saw him and followed him when he went to visit his traps. He followed him just as Great-Grandfather Frog had told him to. Before the morning was over all the traps had been sprung. Those that the coons and minks and muskrats and otters hadn’t found by themselves, Billy told them about after he had followed Farmer Brown’s boy from trap to trap.

After that Great-Grandfather Frog’s reputation for wisdom was greater than ever. All the little people of the Green Meadows and the little folks of the Green Forest went to him more than ever for advice.

*(The Adventures of Jerry Muskrat, Chapter 4)*

## STORY 87. May 20, 1912.

### Who’s a Coward?

Unc’ Billy Possum had made a lot of friends in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows. It was getting so that most of his neighbors smiled whenever they saw the rough-coated little fellow coming their way. This was partly because he had learned politeness in his old home way down in “ol’ Virginny” and partly because he attended

to his own affairs. He never interfered with other people. Sammy Jay, who is quite a dandy, used to make fun of Unc' Billy because he never brushed his hair or kept his coat smooth, and Reddy Fox always sneered at Unc' Billy if he had a chance. But Reddy Fox hasn't any friends anyway, so this really didn't matter. Nobody paid any attention to him until one day he said that Unc' Billy was a coward.

Jimmy Skunk heard him and Jimmy walked right up in front of Reddy, for though Reddy is much bigger, Jimmy isn't the least bit afraid of him.

"What do you know about it?" demanded Jimmy.

"I—I—well, what does he hide so all day for?" asked Reddy weakly. "Because he sleeps days and hunts nights," replied Jimmy. Then he shook his fist in Reddy's face. "If he was half as much a coward as you are, Reddy Fox, I wouldn't have him for a partner."

"Pooh!" said Reddy. It's easy enough for you to say that he isn't a coward, but he's got to prove it before I'll believe it."

"He probably doesn't care whether you believe it or not," said a voice from a little way up the hill. Reddy looked up to see Peter Rabbit grinning at him. Now Reddy is quick tempered and he sprang at Peter, but Peter wasn't there. He had ducked into a hole between the roots of a tree and the entrance was too small for Reddy to get in.

Reddy Fox is fine to see;  
Bright his coat is as can be!  
But his heart is black. I fear,  
So watch out when Reddy's near!

Peter certainly was saucy, and it made Reddy all the madder to have Jimmy Skunk laugh. But when he heard a cracked little "Tee-he-he" and looked up to see Unc' Billy Possum grinning down at him, Reddy was so mad that he fairly danced up and down.

"Come down here, you coward!" he shouted, shaking his fist at Unc' Billy.

"Who's a coward?" demanded Unc' Billy.

"You are!" shouted Reddy.

Just then there was the patter of feet up on the hill and all looked up to see Bowser the Hound coming in that direction. Unc' Billy grinned.

"Now, sah, we'll see who's a coward. Yo'all can run faster than Ah can, but Ah'm goin' to come down out of this tree right smart and we'll see who dares wait longest for Bowser the Hound," and suiting the action to the word Unc' Billy dropped out of the tree right beside Reddy Fox.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar # 22)*



STORY 88. May 21, 1912.

## What Happened to Unc' Billy Possum?

Reddy Fox had called Unc' Billy Possum a coward. Now that is a very dreadful thing to call any one, for no one respects a coward, and no one likes a coward. But Unc' Billy Possum had just grinned and then he had dropped down from the tree beside Reddy Fox and had invited Reddy to wait for Bowser the Hound, who was coming down the hill. Reddy didn't know what to do. There was Bowser in plain sight, and Reddy was afraid, very much afraid. But if he should run before Unc' Billy Possum did he would prove that he was the coward. And of course all the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows would know all about it, for Peter Rabbit and Jimmy Skunk had heard Unc' Billy, and at that very minute were watching from safe hiding places.

"Bow, wow, wow!" roared Bowser the Hound in his deepest voice.

Reddy shivered and began to back away. Unc' Billy just grinned. "What makes yo' all's so uneasy?" he asked.

"Bow, wow, wow!" roared Bowser again and began to run straight toward them, with his mouth wide open.

Reddy could stand it no longer. "I—I—I really would like to stay with you. Mr. Possum, but Granny Fox is waiting for me and I simply cannot stay any longer. Granny wouldn't like it." Reddy shouted the last words over his shoulder as he started for the Green Meadows at the top of his speed.

"Now who's a coward?" shouted Peter Rabbit and Jimmy Skunk together. Reddy Fox gritted his teeth, but he kept right on running. He didn't even turn to see what became of Unc' Billy Possum.

Now when Reddy started to run, Unc' Billy might have climbed a tree, but he didn't. What do you think he did? Why he just fell over in a heap right in front of Bowser the Hound! Jimmy Skunk almost stopped breathing when he saw him fall, and Peter Rabbit clapped both hands over his eyes as Bowser the Hound stopped by Unc' Billy Possum. He didn't want to see what was going to happen to Unc' Billy.

Bowser the Hound stopped and sniffed at Unc' Billy.

"What's this?" "What's this?" said Bowser, for he had never seen Unc' Billy Possum before.

Unc' Billy lay there just as if he were dead. Yes, sir, there didn't seem to be any life in Unc' Billy at all. He lay there with his eyes closed and just as limp, as a rag. Bowser rolled him over and pulled him this way and pushed him that way, but still Unc' Billy didn't move.

"Huh! Must have frightened him to death," said Bowser. "I'll go on and teach that Reddy Fox a lesson and then I'll come back and take this fellow home to show my master." So with one more sniff Bowser the Hound started on after Reddy Fox. Peter

Rabbit and Jimmy Skunk came out of their hiding places and stood looking down at Unc' Billy.

"Poor old Uncle Billy," said Peter Rabbit, and shed a few tears.

"Don't drop salt water all over my nice clothes," said a voice as Peter wiped his eyes.

Peter was so startled that he almost knocked Jimmy Skunk over. There lay Unc' Billy grinning at him and slowly winking one eye.

"Did yo' see me fool him?" asked Unc' Billy as he scrambled to his feet. And to this day Bowser the Hound wonders what became of Unc' Billy Possum.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar # 23)*

## STORY 89. May 22, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Caught at Last

Unc' Billy Possum certainly is fond of eggs. And it is because of this fondness for eggs that the Green Meadows were thrown into great excitement late one afternoon. Just as the black shadows came creeping down from the Purple Hills. Reddy Fox brought the news, and when he told it he grinned as if he enjoyed it and was glad of it.

"Old Billy Possum is dead. I know it because I saw Farmer Brown's boy carrying him home by the tail," said Reddy. "So you see he wasn't so smart as you thought he was," he added maliciously.

No one really believed Reddy Fox, for everyone knows that he seldom tells the truth, but when Jimmy Skunk came mournfully down the Crooked Little Path and said that it was true, they had to believe it. Then everybody began to talk about Unc' Billy and say nice things about him and tell how much they had enjoyed having him live in the Green Forest since he came up from "Ol' Virginny." That is, everybody but Reddy Fox said so. Reddy said that it served Unc' Billy right, because he was of no account, anyway. Then everybody began to hoot and hiss at Reddy until he was glad enough to slink away.

And while they were all saying such nice things about him, Unc' Billy Possum was being carried by the tail up to Farmer Brown's house. For once he had been too bold. He had gone up to Farmer Brown's hen-house before dark. Jimmy Skunk had tried to stop him, but he had heeded Jimmy Skunk not at all. He had said that he was hungry and wanted an egg, and he couldn't wait till dark to get it. So off he had started, for Unc' Billy Possum is very headstrong and obstinate.

He had reached the hen-house and slipped inside without being seen. The nests were full of eggs, and soon Unc' Billy was enjoying his feast so that he forgot to keep watch. Suddenly the door opened, and in stepped Farmer Brown's boy to get some eggs for supper. There was no time to run. Unc' Billy just dropped right down in his tracks as if he were dead.

When Farmer Brown's boy saw him, he didn't know what to make of him, for he had never seen Unc' Billy before.

"Well, well, I wonder what happened to this fellow," said Farmer Brown's boy, turning Unc' Billy over with the toe of one foot. "He certainly is dead enough, whatever killed him. I wonder what he was doing in here."

Then he saw some egg on Unc' Billy's lips. "Ho! ho!" shouted Farmer Brown's boy. "So you are the thief who has been getting my eggs!" And picking up Unc' Billy by the tail, he started with him for the house.

As they passed the woodpile, he tossed Unc' Billy on the chopping-block while he gathered an armful of kindling to take to the house. When he turned to pick up Unc' Billy again, Unc' Billy wasn't there.

Farmer Brown's boy dropped his wood and hunted everywhere, but not a trace of Unc' Billy could he find.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, Chapter 1, "Unc' Billy Possum is Caught")*

## STORY 90. May 23, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Thinks He Sees a Ghost.

Reddy Fox came down the Lone Little Path through the Green Forest on his way to the Green Meadows. He had brushed his red coat until it shone. His white waistcoat was spotless, and he carried his big tail high in the air, that it might not become soiled. Reddy was feeling as fine as he looked. He would have liked to sing, but every time he tried his voice cracked, and he was afraid that someone would hear him and laugh at him. If there is one thing that Reddy Fox dislikes more than another, it is being laughed at.

Reddy chuckled at his thoughts, and what do you think he was thinking about? Why, about how he had seen Farmer Brown's boy carrying off Unc' Billy Possum by the tail the afternoon before. He knew how Farmer Brown's boy had caught Unc' Billy in the hen-house, and with his own eyes he had seen Unc' Billy carried off. Of course Unc' Billy was dead. There could be no doubt about it. And Reddy was glad of it. Yes, sir, Reddy was glad of it. Unc' Billy Possum had made altogether too many friends in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows, and he had made Reddy the laughing-stock of them all by the way he had dared Reddy to meet Bowser the Hound, and actually had waited for Bowser while Reddy ran away.

Reddy remembered that Unc' Billy's hollow tree was not far away. He would go over that way, just to have another look at it. So over he went. There stood the old hollow tree, and half way up was the door out of which Unc' Billy used to look down on him and grin. It was Reddy's turn to grin now. Presently he sat down with his back against the foot of the tree, crossed his legs, looked this way and that way to make sure that no one was about, and then in a dreadfully cracked voice he began to sing:

"Ol' Bill Possum, he's gone before!

Ol' Bill Possum, he is no more!  
Bill was a scamp, Sir;  
Bill was a thief!  
Bill stole an egg, Sir;  
Bill came to grief.  
Ol' Bill Possum, it served him right;  
And he is no more, for he died last night."

"Very good, Sah, very good. Ah sutt'nly am obliged to yo' all for yo' serenade," said a voice that seemed to come out of the tree at Reddy's back.

Reddy Fox sprang up as if someone had stuck a pin into him. Every hair stood on end, as he looked up at Unc' Billy's doorway. Then his teeth began to chatter with fright. Looking out of Unc' Billy's doorway and grinning down at him was something that looked for all the world like Unc' Billy himself.

"It must be his ghost!" muttered Reddy, and tucking his tail between his legs, he started up the Crooked Little Path as fast as his legs could take him.

Reddy never once looked back. If he had, he might have seen Unc' Billy Possum climb down from the hollow tree and shake hands with Jimmy Skunk, who had just come along.

"How did Ah do it? Why, Ah just pretended Ah was daid, when Farmer Brown's boy caught me," explained Unc' Billy. "Of course he' wouldn't kill a daid Possum. So when he tossed me down on the chopping-block and turned his back, Ah just naturally came to life again, and here Ah am."

Unc' Billy Possum grinned broader than ever, and Jimmy Skunk grinned, too.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, chapter 2)*

## STORY 91. May 24, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Sends for his Family

The news that Unc' Billy Possum wasn't dead at all but was back in his hollow tree soon spread through all the Green Forest and over the Green Meadows. Everybody hastened to pay their respects—that is everybody but Reddy Fox. Unc' Billy and his partner, Jimmy Skunk, told everyone who called how Reddy Fox had thought that Unc' Billy was a ghost and had been frightened almost to death, so that he ran away as fast as his legs could take him. Unc' Billy grinned as he told how Reddy had sat under the hollow tree and tried to sing because he was so glad that Unc' Billy was dead, and all the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows laughed until their sides ached when in a funny, cracked voice Unc' Billy sang the song for them.

Thereafter whenever one of them caught sight of Reddy Fox at a safe distance, he would shout:

"Ol' Bill Possum, he's gone before!

Ol' Bill Possum, he is no more!"

It got so that Reddy never came down on the Green Meadows in the daytime, and at night he avoided meeting anyone if possible, even his old friend, Bobby Coon. And of course Reddy Fox hated Unc' Billy Possum more than ever.

But Unc' Billy didn't care, not he! He knew that all the rest of the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows thought him the smartest of them all, because of the way in which he had fooled Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown's boy. He liked his neighbors, he liked the Green Forest, and so he made up his mind that this was the place for him to stay.

But in spite of all his friends, Unc' Billy was lonesome. The longer he stayed, the more lonesome he grew. Unc' Billy wanted his family, whom he had left way down in "Ol' Virginny." Finally he told Jimmy Skunk all about it, and for once Unc' Billy had forgotten how to grin. Yes, Sir, Unc' Billy had forgotten how to grin. Instead he just wept, wept great big tears of lonesomeness into his red bandanna handkerchief<sup>23</sup>.

"Ah reckon Ah'll have to go back to Ol' Virginny, Ah sutt'nly do," said Unc' Billy Possum from the depths of his red bandanna handkerchief.

Jimmy Skunk grew very thoughtful. Since he and Unc' Billy Possum had been in partnership, Jimmy had had more eggs to eat than ever before in his whole life. Now Unc' Billy was talking about going away. Jimmy thought very hard. Then he had a bright idea.

"Why not send for your family to come here and live in the Green Forest, Uncle Billy?" he asked.

Unc' Billy stopped crying. His two little eyes looked out sharply from the midst of the red bandanna handkerchief.

"How do yo'all reckon Ah can send word?" he asked.

Jimmy scratched his head. "There's Mr. Skimmer the Swallow; he's fixing to go South; perhaps he'll take the message to your family," said he.

"The very thing!" cried Unc' Billy Possum, wiping his eyes and stuffing the red bandanna into his coat tail. "Ah thanks yo', Sah. Ah does, indeed. Ah'll see Mistah Skimmer at once."

And without another word Unc' Billy Possum started down the Crooked Little Path for the Green Meadows to look for Skimmer the Swallow.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, chapter 3)*

**STORY 92. May 25, 1912.**

## **Bobby Coon Enters the Wrong House**

After Unc' Billy Possum had arranged with Mr. Skimmer the Swallow, who was

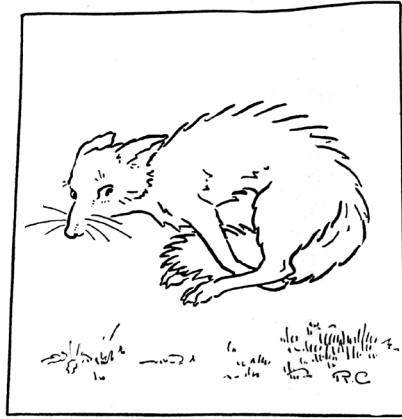
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23 Anthropomorphism. All bandanna references were removed for book chapter.

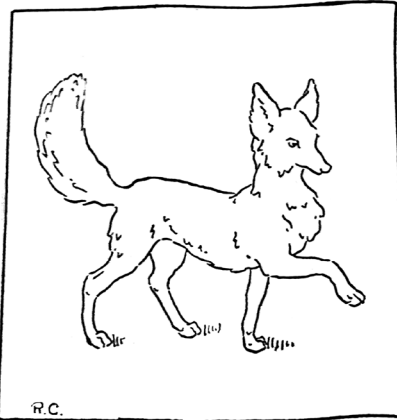
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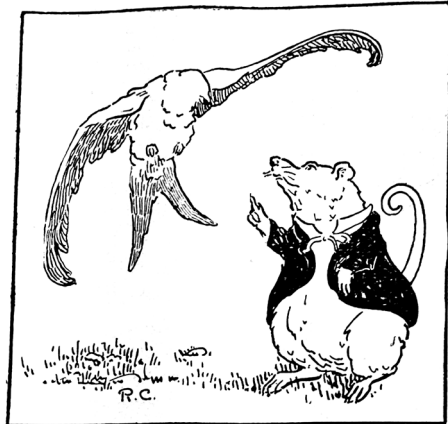
87. Who's a Coward?



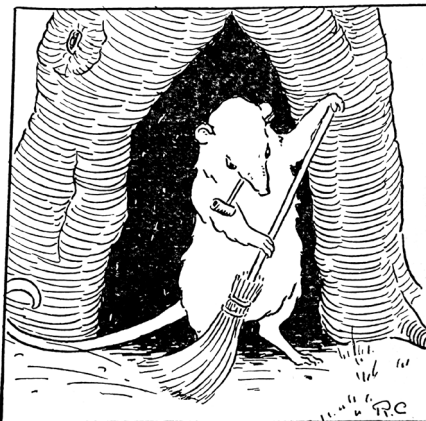
88. What Happened to Unc' Billy Possum?



90. Reddy Fox Thinks He Sees a Ghost



91. Unc' Billy Possum Sends For His Family



92. Bobby Coon Enters the Wrong House

going South, to take a message to his family in “Ol’ Virginny,” telling them to come and join him in the Green Forest, he at once began to make preparations to receive them. Unc’ Billy isn’t any too fond of work. He had a lot rather that someone else should do the work for him, and he is smart enough to fix it so that usually someone else does.

But getting ready to receive his family was different. No one else could arrange things to suit him. This was Unc’ Billy’s own job, and he was right on it every minute of the day. First of all he had to clean house. He had been keeping bachelor’s hall so long in the big hollow tree that things were not very tidy. So Unc’ Billy cleaned house, and while he worked he whistled and sang. Peter Rabbit, passing that way, overheard Unc’ Billy singing:

“Mah ol’ woman is away down souf—  
Come along! Come along!  
Ain’t nothin’ sharper than the tongue in her mouf—  
Come along! Come along!  
She once was pretty, but she ain’t no mo’,  
But she cooks mah meals an’ she sweeps mah flo’;  
She darns mah stockings an’ she mends mah coat,  
An’ she knows jes’ how mah chillun fer to tote—  
Come along! Come along!

“Mah pickaninnies am a-headin’ dis way—  
Come along! Come along!  
Daddy am a-watchin’ fo’ ‘em day by day—  
Come along! Come along!  
Mah ol’ haid aches when Ah thinks ob de noise  
De’s boun’ to be wid dem gals an’ boys,  
But Ah doan care if it busts in two  
If de good Lord brings dem chillun troo—  
Come along! Come along!”

Every little while Unc’ Billy Possum would sit down to rest, for he wasn’t used to so much real work. But finally he got his house clean and made as comfortable as possible, and about that time he began to think how good an egg would taste. The more he thought about it, the more he wanted that egg.

“It’s no use talking, Ah just naturally has to have that egg,” said Unc’ Billy to himself, and off he started for Farmer Brown’s.

Now Unc’ Billy was hardly out of sight when along came Bobby Coon. Bobby Coon was absent-minded, or else he was so sleepy that he didn’t know what he was doing, for Bobby Coon had been out all night. Anyway, when he reached Unc’ Billy Possum’s hollow tree, he began to climb up it just as if it were his own. He looked in at Unc’ Billy’s door. There was the nicest bed that he had seen for a long time. He looked this way and he looked that way. Nobody was in sight. Then he looked in at Unc’ Billy’s door once more. That bed certainly did look soft and comfortable. Bobby Coon chuckled to himself.

“I believe I’ll just see if that bed is as comfortable as it looks,” said he. And two minutes later Bobby Coon was curled up fast asleep in Unc’ Billy Possum’s bed.

*(Adventures of Unc’ Billy Possum, chapter 5)*

## STORY 93. May 27, 1912.

### Bobby Coon is Waked Up

“Dey’s a-coming, dey’s a-coming, dey’s a-coming mighty soon.  
But dey can’t come soon enuff fo’ me!  
Dey’s a-coming, dey’s a-coming at de turning ob de moon,  
Whar Ah waits in mah ol’ holler tree!”

Unc’ Billy Possum was singing to himself, as he slowly trudged home from Farmer Brown’s hen-house. He was feeling very good, very good indeed, was Unc’ Billy Possum. No one appreciates strictly fresh eggs more than Unc’ Billy does, and waiting for him in Farmer Brown’s henhouse he had found more than he could eat waiting for him. Now his stomach was full, his house had been cleaned and put to rights, ready for his family when they should arrive from “Ol’ Virginny,” and he had nothing to do but wait for them. So he trudged along and sang in a funny, cracked voice.

Presently he came to his big hollow tree and started to climb up to the door of his house. Half way up he broke off short in the middle of his song and sat down on a convenient branch. He put one ear against the trunk of the tree and listened. Then he put the other ear against the tree and listened. There certainly was a funny noise, and it seemed to come from right inside his hollow tree. Unc’ Billy turned and looked up at his doorway, scratching his head thoughtfully with one hand.

“Mah goodness!” said Unc’ Billy, “it sutt’nly sounds like there was somebody in mah house!”

Then very softly Unc’ Billy crept up to his doorway and peeped in. It was dark inside, so that Unc’ Billy could see little else than that his nice, freshly made, comfortable bed was all mussed up. But if he couldn’t see, he could hear perfectly well and what he heard was a snore! There was someone in Unc’ Billy’s house, and more than that, they were fast asleep in Unc’ Billy’s bed.

“Mah goodness! Mah goodness!” exclaimed Unc’ Billy Possum, and his two sharp little eyes began to snap. Then he stuck his head in at the door and shouted:

“Hi, yo’ all! What yo’ doing in mah house?”

The only answer was another snore. Unc’ Billy waited a minute. Then he put his head in once more.

“Yo’ better come out of mah house, Mr. Who-ever-yo’-are, before Ah comes in and puts yo’ out!” shouted Unc’ Billy.

The only answer was a snore louder than before. Then Unc’ Billy quite lost his temper. Some one who had no business there was in his house! He didn’t know who it



was, and he didn't care. They were going to come out or he would know why not. Unc' Billy gritted his teeth and in he went.

My! my! such a rumpus as there was right away in that hollow tree! Peter Rabbit happened to be coming along that way and heard it. Peter stopped and gazed at the hollow tree with eyes and mouth wide open. Such a snarling and growling! Then out of the doorway began to fly leaves and moss. They were part of Unc' Billy's bed. Then Peter saw a big ringed tail hanging out of the doorway. Peter recognized it right away. No one possessed a tail like that but Bobby Coon.

In a minute Bobby followed his tail, hastily backing down the tree. Then Unc' Billy's sharp little old face appeared at the doorway. Unc' Billy looked down at Peter Rabbit and grinned.

"Ah guess Mistah Coon done make a mistake when he went to bed in mah house," said he. And Bobby Coon sheepishly admitted that he did.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, chapter 6)*

## STORY 94. May 28, 1912.

### Bobby Coon Gets a Wetting

Bobby Coon was strolling along the bank of the Laughing Brook. He was trying to decide whether to go fishing or not. He dearly loves to fish, does Bobby Coon, and he sometimes goes fishing when he ought to be attending to other things. Now while Bobby Coon loves to fish, he isn't like Billy Mink or Little Joe Otter, who spend half their time in the water and catch fish by swimming faster than the fish can. Bobby has a long coat and he isn't any too fond of getting it wet. He catches fish from the shore. There isn't anything much quicker than Bobby's little black paw when he sees a fish within reach.

But if Bobby Coon doesn't like to go in swimming he does like to play in and around the water, and so this bright, beautiful morning as he came down the Laughing Brook he stopped at every little pool to play in. By and by his sharp eyes spied something bright and shiny on the bottom of a tiny pool.

Now Bobby Coon can no more pass anything bright and shiny than he can pass a good meal when he sees it. He simply has got to have it. It doesn't make any difference what it is, he has got to have it. So when he saw this something glittering and shining up at him from the bottom of the tiny pool he forgot all about fish.

First he plunged one arm in way up to the shoulder. It was of no use at all. The shiny thing was too far out from the bank. He waded in a little way, but still he couldn't reach it. Jolly, round red Mr. Sun, looking down from the blue sky, laughed at Bobby Coon's efforts and when he laughed the bright thing glittered more than ever, and the more it glittered the more Bobby Coon wanted it.

Bobby sat down on the bank to study how he could get his heart's desire, for it seemed to him now that he wanted the shiny thing more than anything else in the

world. Presently he noticed an old log, half in the water and half on the shore. Bobby's eyes brightened. "If I get out on the end of that perhaps can reach that shiny thing; I believe I can," said he to himself.

Very cautiously he crawled out on the old log. It wasn't a very big log and it was smooth and very, very slippery. As he got out toward the end of it, it began to sink lower and lower in the water. Bobby's feet were wet, but he didn't seem to mind that. He was right over that shiny thing now. Hanging to the old log with his feet and one hand, he reached down, down till the tips of his fingers just touched the bright, shiny thing. And right then the old log gave a sudden lurch and, with a tremendous splash, in went Bobby Coon, head first!

Up on the bank Peter Rabbit and Jimmy Skunk and Unc' Billy Possum shouted and danced and threw up their hats! They had come along just in time to see Bobby Coon crawl out on the old log. Then one of them had slipped down and given the old log a push at just the right minute.

At first Bobby Coon was too mad to speak, but by the time he had blown all the water out of his nose and shaken it out of his ears and eyes, he began to see the joke. Besides, he didn't know which of the three little scamps on the bank to blame, and he didn't want to quarrel with all three. So presently he joined in the laugh too. And then, being in all over, there was nothing to prevent getting that bright, shiny thing. What was it? Why nothing but a scrap of tin.

## STORY 95. May 29, 1912.

### The Neatness of Bobby Coon

Bobby Coon yawned and stretched lazily. Then he climbed out of bed and stuck his head out of the doorway in the hollow tree which was his home. The black shadows had already crept far out from the Purple Hills, and looking up through the tree tops he saw a star winking at him. Bobby Coon winked back, and then slowly climbed out of the hollow tree.

He had slept all day, for Bobby Coon often had rather sleep through the bright day and prowl around all night. The fact is, Bobby Coon is very apt to get into mischief. Somehow, he can't seem to help it. If there is any mischief to get into Bobby Coon is pretty sure to be found right in the middle of it. So, because it is safer to go to forbidden places at night than in the bright light of the sun, Bobby Coon prefers to sleep during the day.

When he had come down from the hollow tree Bobby Coon carefully brushed his handsome coat, waistcoat and trousers and combed out his beautiful ringed tail. Then he washed his face and hands, for, whatever faults Bobby may have, he is always neat. Yes, sir: there is no one in the Green Forest who is neater than Bobby Coon.

Bobby Coon looked quite the dandy as he started down the Lone Little Path to the Green Meadows and across to the Smiling Pool. There he found Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink just returned from a fishing trip. They were just preparing for a feast as

Bobby came along.

“Hello, Bobby Coon!” cried Little Joe Otter. “Come have some fish with us.”

Billy Mink didn’t look at all pleased at Little Joe Otter’s invitation, for Billy is inclined to be selfish, and what he cannot eat himself he hides away. But he said nothing, merely reaching out for the largest fish for himself.

“Thank you,” said Bobby Coon, “I believe I will.”

Now Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter are not at all fussy about their food. It didn’t trouble them a bit because there was dirt on the fish from dragging them up the bank, and the bits of dead grass and bark sticking to the fish they did not notice at all. But Bobby Coon did. Bobby is fussy, very fussy about his food. He took the fish given him and dragged it down the bank to the edge of the Smiling Pool.

Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter stopped eating to watch him. When he had found a comfortable place on the edge of the Smiling Pool Bobby Coon began to eat, but before he put it in his mouth each piece of fish was carefully washed.

“My, aren’t we nice?” jeered Billy Mink.

“Did you think that fish was poisoned?” demanded Little Joe Otter, scowling down at Bobby.

“What’s good enough for us isn’t good enough for him,” broke in Billy Mink.

Bobby Coon looked up and grinned. “Nothing of that sort,” said he. “I wash all my food. It doesn’t matter where I get it or what it is, if there is any water near I wash it. Honest, fellows, you don’t know how much better it tastes.”

“Too much work,” grunted Little Joe Otter with his mouth full.

Bobby just smiled and kept right on washing his food, and when he had finished he washed his hands and face.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #32)*

## STORY 96. May 30, 1912.

### Bobby Coon Has a Good Time

“Sing a little, dance a little, have a little fun;  
Stars are all a winking, for the night has just begun.”

Bobby Coon looked up and winked back at the stars as he sang. His stomach was full for he had just filled it down at the Smiling Pool with fish that Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter had invited him to share with them. Bobby strolled along lazily through the Green Meadows. What should he do next? He didn’t need or want anything more to eat. Presently he met Jimmy Skunk.

“Hello Jimmy! Come on and have some fun,” said Bobby Coon.

But Jimmy had had no invitation out to dine, and he was hungry, so he kept right

on his way looking for beetles.

Pretty soon along came Reddy Fox. But Reddy was hungry, too, and he wouldn't stop to play. Then Hooty the Owl flew over as softly as a shadow, but Hooty was also hunting for something to fill his stomach. It was of no use; no one had time to play so early in the night.

Bobby Coon shoved his hands in his pockets and strolled up the Lone Little Path. Presently he came to Johnny Chuck's house. There was the yellow mound on which Johnny Chuck used to sit each day and watch the world go by. Bobby Coon stopped to listen at the open door. He could hear Johnny Chuck snoring in his bed room way down below.

A twinkle of mischief came into Bobby Coon's eyes. Not far away stood a stack of Farmer Brown's hay. Bobby went over and got an armful. He came back and dropped it over Johnny Chuck's doorway. Then he brought another and another. After that he hunted until he found Johnny Chuck's back door. He covered that up in the same way.

"Now," said Bobby Coon, and his eyes twinkled more than ever, "Johnny Chuck won't know when to wake up, and perhaps he'll sleep all day tomorrow."

Then Bobby Coon shoved his hands in his pockets once more and started on up the Lone Little Path, and from there he went up the Crooked Little Path to the top of the hill. On the way he passed Jimmy Skunk's house. He knew that Jimmy was out hunting for something to eat. His eyes began to twinkle again and he chuckled as he saw a stone just big enough to fill the doorway of Jimmy Skunk's house. Bobby Coon tugged and pulled and pushed until he got the stone in place. Then he packed sand all around it and over it.

"When Jimmy Skunk comes home he'll think his house has run away," chuckled Bobby Coon as once more he started on his way.

So he wandered on all the bright moon-lit night, getting into more and more mischief, and when the little stars began to wink out one after another Bobby Coon turned his steps toward the old hollow tree where his home is, so tired and sleepy that he could hardly get there.

"Sing a little, dance a little, have a little fun;  
Stars are"—

Bobby Coon was fast asleep before he could finish.

(Published as single-story booklet by John H. Eggers in 1928)

## STORY 97. May 31, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Gets Up Late

"It must be I've waked up early," said Johnny Chuck, rolling over and looking up the long hall which led from his bedroom up to his doorway. The hall was dark. It certainly must be that he had waked up very early. He yawned sleepily, stretched, and

then curled up for another nap. By and by Johnny Chuck opened his eyes once more. It was just as dark as before. "What ails me to keep waking up in the night like this?" said Johnny, "I never have before. And my goodness, how hungry I am!"

Just then Johnny heard a sound that made him sit up so suddenly that he bumped his head, for the roof of his bedroom is very low.

"Ouch!" cried Johnny Chuck.

Then he hopped out of bed and without waiting to wash his face or comb his hair he started up the long hall toward his front door. He had heard Sammy Jay laughing fit to kill himself, and he knew that Sammy Jay never, never would be out there laughing in the night. It was still dark in the hall and outside he could still hear Sammy Jay laughing. What could it mean?

Finally Johnny Chuck reached his doorway. It was all covered up with hay and that was why the hall was dark. Johnny pushed the hay out of the way and stepped out. The bright sunlight made him blink. Sammy Jay screamed louder than ever with laughter. Johnny blinked and blinked and Sammy Jay laughed and laughed. Johnny looked up at jolly, round, red Mr. Sun. He was almost overhead. Usually he was just beginning to climb the blue, blue sky when Johnny Chuck came out for his breakfast.

"Oh, you sleepy-head!" shouted Sammy Jay.

Johnny Chuck looked sheepish, but he couldn't say a word, for here it was the middle of the day and he hadn't had breakfast yet.

Just then along came Jimmy Skunk. Jimmy looked most disreputable. He certainly did. His clothes were tumbled and rumpled and dirty. And Jimmy was so sleepy that he could hardly keep his eyes open. Evidently he had been out all night.

"Have you seen anything of my house?" asked Jimmy Skunk.

"What!" exclaimed Johnny Chuck.

"I asked you if you had seen anything of my house; have you?" replied Jimmy Skunk, crossly, for he was very, very sleepy.

Johnny stared at Jimmy for a full minute. "Are you crazy, Jimmy Skunk?" he asked. "How could I see anything of your house when I've just got up? Besides, houses don't run away."

"Mine has," replied Jimmy mournfully.

## STORY 98. June 1, 1912.

### **Bobby Coon Takes His Own Medicine**

Bobby Coon had been out all night, and he was tired and so sleepy that it was all he could do to climb up to his home in the hollow tree. No sooner did he tumble into bed than he was fast asleep.

Illustrations. May 27 to June 1, 1912.



93. Bobby Coon is Waked up



94. Bobby Coon Gets a Wetting



95. The Neatness of Bobby Coon



96. Bobby Coon Has a Good Time



97. Johnny Chuck Gets Up Late



98. Bobby Coon Takes his Own Medicine

Now, Bobby Coon is a great practical joker. There is nothing that he likes better than to play a joke on some of the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest, and every night after he has filled his stomach he goes about playing tricks.

Ever since the morning when Johnny Chuck had slept until nearly noon because Bobby Coon had covered his door-way with hay so that no light could get down to his bedroom, and so he didn't know when to get up, Johnny had been trying and trying to think of some plan to get even with Bobby Coon. He had called in Jimmy Skunk, who had spent all of one morning trying to find his own house, which Bobby Coon had buried in sand while Jimmy was out hunting for beetles. Suddenly they heard a sound in the big hickory which made Jimmy Skunk jump up and dance a jig.

"I have it!" he shouted. "Do you hear Drummer the Woodpecker? We'll get him to help us."

So it happens that Bobby Coon had not been asleep in his hollow tree more than half an hour when into his dreams broke the sound of knocking. Bobby waked up to murmur sleepily: "Go' way. There's nobody home." But the knocking kept right on, tap, tap, tap, tap. Bobby couldn't get to sleep again, try as he would.

"Go 'way, I say!" he called crossly.

The only reply was tap, tap, tap, tap. Bobby crawled out of bed and climbed up to his doorway. When he stuck his head out the sun made him blink and almost blinded him. He rubbed his eyes with both fists, and then he looked to see who had knocked. No one was to be seen. There wasn't a sign of any one anywhere. Could he have dreamed that someone was knocking? He must have. He took one more look around and then scrambled back to bed. No sooner had he begun to doze than there began a terrific noise—rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-tat. It seemed as if it was right in his ear.

Bobby Coon was wide awake this time as he scrambled up to his doorway, and he was mad way through. He knew now who was making such a racket; it was Drummer the Woodpecker. If he wanted to drum he could just go find some other hollow tree! Bobby stuck his head out. No one was to be seen, but this time the noise didn't stop. Oh, my, no! It was louder than ever, but it come from the back side of the tree.

Bobby crept out and very quietly crawled around the tree, but when he got to the back side no one was to be seen and the rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat was louder than ever and came from the front. Back went Bobby with the same result as before. Then he lost his temper and scrambled 'round and 'round the tree as fast he could, but never once did he catch sight of Drummer, who just went around the tree as fast as Bobby did, and all the time kept up a terrific drumming.

Finally Bobby Coon stopped to get his breath. He happened to look down and there he saw Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk rolling over and over on the ground with laughter. Gradually Bobby Coon began to see the joke.

"I guess you fellows are even," said he. "Now, do let me sleep a little."

So, after a while, Jimmy Skunk and Johnny Chuck called off Drummer the Woodpecker and Bobby Coon went back to bed.

## STORY 99. June 3, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Has a Plan.

Everyone in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows knew that Unc' Billy Possum had sent by Skimmer the Swallow for his family to leave "Ol Virginny" and to come to the Green Forest. Unc' Billy was so eager and impatient for them to arrive that he could talk of nothing else. Little forest people passing Unc' Billy's hollow tree would sometimes hear him singing:

Ah's lived alone fo' a long, long time,  
But Ah won't live alone no mo';  
Mah chillun's coming dis tree to clim'  
And to play all about mah do'.

One day Peter Rabbit heard him and it set Peter to thinking. Most of the little people of the Green Forest and Green Meadows liked Unc' Billy Possum, and all were interested in Unc' Billy's family. Why not get up a party, a surprise party, to greet Unc' Billy's family when they should arrive? Peter was so tickled with the idea that straight-away he turned a couple of somersaults in the middle of the path and then hurried over to Johnny Chuck's house to see what Johnny thought of the plan.

Johnny Chuck thought Peter's idea was splendid. They got their heads together and made a list of those they would invite. It included Jumper the Hare, Jimmy Skunk, Bobby Coon, Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter, Jerry Muskrat, Grandfather Frog, Danny Meadow Mouse, Whitefoot the Wood Mouse, Happy Jack Squirrel, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, Striped Chipmunk, old Mr. Toad, Spotty the Turtle and Prickly Porky, of course.

"What about Reddy Fox?" asked Peter.

Johnny Chuck made a wry face.

"And Shadow the Weasel?" asked Peter.

Another wry face from Johnny Chuck.

"And Blacky the Crow and Sammy Jay," continued Peter.

They're trouble makers," replied Johnny.

"And Drummer the Woodpecker?"

"Of course," replied Johnny. "We need Drummer to beat the long roll when the family arrives."

So Peter Rabbit hurried off to invite all those named to join in giving Unc' Billy Possum's family a surprise party when they arrived. Everyone agreed to come and to bring something to eat.

"Remember, it's secret so as to be a surprise," warned Peter. "Cross your heart that you won't tell a soul about it."



And each one crossed his heart and promised not to tell. You see, Peter didn't want Reddy Fox or Shadow the Weasel or Sammy Jay or Blacky the Crow, who had not been invited, to know anything about it. Tired and footsore from delivering all his invitations, Peter Rabbit sat on Johnny Chuck's doorstep that evening.

"It's a good plan," said Peter Rabbit.

"It's a splendid plan," said Johnny Chuck. "Won't Unc' Billy be surprised?"

## STORY 100. June 4.

### Sammy Jay Learns Peter Rabbit's Secret

I'm Mr. Jaybird, tee-hee-hee!  
I'm Mr. Jaybird, you watch me!  
You've got to rise 'fore break of day  
If you want to fool old Mr. Jay.

Over and over Sammy Jay hummed this as he brushed his handsome blue and white coat. Then he laughed, as he remarked to no one in particular, for no one was near enough to hear: "Peter Rabbit's got a secret. When Peter goes about whispering it's a sure sign that he's got a secret. He thinks that he can keep it from me, but he can't. Oh, my, no! I never knew of a secret that could be kept by more than two people, and already I have seen Peter whisper to five. I'll just see what Reddy Fox knows about it."

With a flirt of his tail Sammy Jay started for the Green Meadows, where Reddy Fox was busy hunting for his breakfast.

"It's a fine morning. Reddy Fox," said Sammy Jay.

"It would be finer if I could fill my stomach faster," replied Reddy.

"That's a pretty good secret of Peter Rabbit's, isn't it?" asked Sammy, pretending to look very wise.

Reddy pricked up his sharp, little ears. "What secret?" he demanded.

"If you don't know I'm not going to tell," retorted Sammy Jay, just as if he knew all about it, and off he flew to hunt up his cousin, Blacky the Crow. Blacky knew nothing about Peter Rabbit's secret, nor did Shadow the Weasel, whom he met by the way. But Sammy Jay was not in the least bit discouraged.

"I'll try Johnny Chuck; he'll know," said Sammy to himself.

He found Johnny sitting on his doorstep watching the world go by.

"Good morning. Johnny Chuck," said Sammy with a low bow.

"Good morning," replied Johnny Chuck, who always is polite.

"Isn't that a fine secret of Peter Rabbit's?" exclaimed Sammy, just as if he knew all about it.

Johnny Chuck raised his eyebrows and put on the most surprised look.

“Do tell me what it is!” he begged.

“Oh, if you don’t know I won’t tell, for that wouldn’t be fair,” replied Sammy, and tried to look very honest and innocent. And then he flew over to the Green Forest, and as he flew, he said to himself: “Johnny Chuck can’t fool me; he does know Peter Rabbit’s secret.”

Over in the Green Forest he found Drummer the Woodpecker making a great racket on the hollow limb of an old chestnut. Sammy sat down nearby and listened. “My, that’s fine! I wish I could do that! You must be practicing,” said Sammy at the end of a long rat-a-tat-tat.

Drummer the Woodpecker felt very much flattered. “I am,” said he. “I’m practicing for Peter Rabbit’s party.”

“I thought so,” replied Sammy Jay. Of course, he hadn’t thought anything of the kind.

“Won’t Unc’ Billy Possum be surprised?” remarked Drummer the Woodpecker as he sat down to rest.

“He surely will,” replied Sammy Jay, and then he flattered and flattered Drummer the Woodpecker until finally Drummer told all about Peter’s plan for a surprise party for Unc’ Billy Possum.

By and by, as he flew home, Sammy Jay chuckled and said:

You’ve got to rise ‘fore break of day  
If you want to fool old Mr. Jay.

*(The Adventures of Unc’ Billy Possum, Chapter 6)*

## STORY 101. June 5, 1912.

### Four Little Scamps Plan Mischief

“Some folks think they’re mighty smart—  
Oh, la me! Oh, la me!  
Like the knave who stole the tart—  
Oh, la me! Oh, la me!  
Some folks will waken up some day—  
And find they can’t fool Mr. Jay!”

Sammy Jay was mightily pleased with himself. He had found out all about Peter Rabbit’s plan to give Unc’ Billy Possum a surprise party. He had found out that all the little forest and meadow people but himself and his cousin, Blacky the Crow, and Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel had been invited, and that each was to bring something good to eat. Sammy Jay smacked his lips as he thought of this. Then he looked up at jolly, round, red Mr. Sun and winked.

Now on all the Green Meadows and in all the Green Forest, there live no greater scamps than Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow and Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel. The worst of it is, they are not honest. They steal whenever they get a chance, and always they try to get others into trouble. So Peter Rabbit had left them out, when he planned his surprise party for Unc' Billy Possum.

Sammy Jay called the three others together under the Lone Pine and told them all about Peter Rabbit's plan and how they had been left out. Of course, Blacky the Crow and Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel were angry, very angry indeed, for no one likes to be left out of a good time. The more Sammy Jay told them, the angrier they grew; and the angrier they grew, the more Sammy Jay chuckled, way down inside. Sammy had a plan, and the angrier the others grew, the more likely were they to help him.

"You wait till I catch Peter Rabbit!" said Reddy Fox and showed all his teeth. He quite forgot that, despite all his smartness, he never yet had caught Peter Rabbit.

Blacky the Crow scratched his head thoughtfully. "We can spoil his surprise by telling Unc' Billy Possum all about it beforehand," said he.

Sammy Jay winked at each of the others. He cleared his throat and looked all around, to make sure that no one else was near. Then he leaned forward and whispered: "Let's invite ourselves to the party."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the others, all together.

"Just what I say," replied Sammy. "We'll be the real surprise. Before the party begins, you will hide close to where it is to be. When everybody has got there and brought all the good things to eat, I'll come flying along and scream: 'Here comes Bowser the Hound!' Of course, everyone will run away, and we'll have all the good things to eat."

"Haw! haw! haw! The very thing! We'll all be there," cried Blacky the Crow.

The four little scamps shook hands and separated. As they went across the Green Meadows, Sammy Jay's voice floated back to the Lone Pine. He was singing:

Some folks will waken up some day—  
And find they can't fool Mr. Jay!"

"Is that so? Really now, I want to know," said old Mr. Toad, crawling from under the very piece of bark on which Sammy Jay had sat when he told his plan. Then old Mr. Toad winked slowly and solemnly at jolly, round, red Mr. Sun and started off to find Peter Rabbit.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, Chapter 7)*

STORY 102. June 6, 1912.

## Peter Rabbit Sends Out Word

It was a beautiful morning. Everybody said so, and what everybody says is usually so. Peter Rabbit wore the broadest kind of a smile. He hopped and skipped all the way

down the Lone Little Path on to the Green Meadows and was waiting there when Old Mother West Wind came down from the Purple Hills and, turning her big bag upside down, tumbled out all her children, the Merry Little Breezes, to play. Peter stopped them before they had a chance to run away. He whispered to each, and each in turn started to dance across the Green Meadows to carry the news that this was the day of Peter Rabbit's surprise party for Unc' Billy Possum, whose family would arrive that very morning from way down in "Ol' Virginny."

Sammy Jay had not been invited to the party. Neither had Blacky the Crow nor Reddy Fox nor Shadow the Weasel. But they had found out all about the party and they had made up their minds to be there. Yes, sir, they meant to be there, and they did not intend to take any good things to eat either. The fact is, they were planning to break up Peter Rabbit's party and steal the good things which the other little meadow and forest people brought.

Sammy Jay had risen very early that morning. Almost at once his sharp eyes had seen Peter Rabbit sending out the Merry Little Breezes. Sammy's wits are as sharp as his eyes, and you know it is very hard to really fool sharp wits. Right away Sammy had guessed what the Merry Little Breezes were hurrying so for, but he sat and waited and listened. Pretty soon he heard Drummer the Woodpecker start a long rat-a-tat-tat over by Unc' Billy Possum's hollow tree. Then Sammy was sure that this was the day of Peter Rabbit's party.

Sammy grinned as he hurried off to find Blacky the Crow and Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel. Reddy was not yet out of bed, but when he heard Sammy Jay at his door, he tumbled out in a hurry. He didn't stop to get any breakfast, because he had planned to get all he could eat at the party. So he hurried over to where the party was to be. Very cautiously he crept up, and when he was quite sure that no one was about, he crawled into a hollow log which was open at one end. There he stretched himself out and made himself as comfortable as he could and chuckled softly while he waited for the party to begin.

Pretty soon Shadow the Weasel joined Reddy Fox in the hollow log, and they waited. They knew that Blacky the Crow was safely hidden in the top of a tall pine, where he could see all that went on, and that Sammy Jay was flying about over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest, pretending that he was attending wholly to his own business, but really watching all the preparations for Peter Rabbit's party.

At the foot of a tree, in the top of which Prickly Porky the Porcupine was eating his breakfast, sat old Mr. Toad, nodding sleepily. Sammy Jay saw him there but, smart as Sammy is, he didn't once suspect innocent-looking old Mr. Toad. You see, he didn't know that old Mr. Toad had overheard all of the plans of Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow, and Reddy Fox, and Shadow the Weasel.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, Chapter 8)*

STORY 103. June 7, 1912.

## Mr. Toad and Prickly Porky Put Their Heads Together

Slowly Prickly Porky the Porcupine climbed down from the top of the tall poplar tree where he had been getting his breakfast of tender young bark. He grunted as he worked his way down, for he had with him a bundle of bark to take over to Peter Rabbit's surprise party. When he reached the ground, Prickly Porky shook himself until he rattled the thousand little spears hidden in his long coat.

"Tee-hee-hee!"

"Who dares to laugh at me?" demanded Pricky Porky, shaking himself until all the little spears rattled again, and some of them began to peep out of his long coat.

"No one is laughing at you," replied a voice right behind him. Prickly Porky turned around. There sat old Mr. Toad. His big mouth was stretched wide open, and he was laughing all to himself. Something was tickling old Mr. Toad mightily. Prickly Porky scowled, and a few more little spears peeped out of his long coat. You know no one likes to be laughed at, and it certainly did look as if old Mr. Toad was laughing at him.

Mr. Toad stopped laughing and hopped a step nearer. "It's a joke," said he, and slowly winked one eye.

"I don't see any joke," said Prickly Porky, and his voice was very fretful.

Mr. Toad hopped a step nearer. "Are you going to Peter Rabbit's party?"

"Of course, I am. What a foolish question," replied Prickly Porky.

"To be sure, a very foolish question, a very foolish question, indeed," assented Mr. Toad. "Do you know that Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow and Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel, who have not been invited, are planning to break up the party and then gobble up all the good things to eat?" he continued.

Prickly Porky laid down his bundle of tender young bark and stared at old Mr. Toad, "How do you know?" he demanded.

Old Mr. Toad chuckled deep down in his throat. "I was underneath a piece of bark on which Sammy Jay was sitting when the plan was made. Of course, he didn't know I was there, and of course I didn't tell him."

"Of course not," continued Prickly Porky, beginning to grin.

"Of course not," continued Mr. Toad, grinning, too. Then he told Prickly Porky all about the plan he had overheard, how Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel and Blacky the Crow were to hide near Unc' Billy Possum's hollow tree, and how Sammy Jay was to frighten away everybody else by pretending that Bowser the Hound was coming.

"Have you told Peter Rabbit?" asked Prickly Porky. "Not yet, but I'm going to, by and by," replied old Mr. Toad. "But first, I want you to help me fool Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow and Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel. Will you?"

“Of course, I will if I can, but how can I?” answered Prickly Porky promptly.

Old Mr. Toad hopped up, and stretching up on tiptoe, whispered in one of Prickly Porky’s ears. Prickly Porky began to smile. Then he began to chuckle. Finally, he laughed until he had to hold his sides.

“Will you do it?” asked Mr. Toad.

Prickly Porky reached for his bundle of tender young bark. “Of course, I will,” said he, still chuckling. “Come on, Mr. Toad, it’s time we were going.”

*(The Adventures of Unc’ Billy Possum, Chapter 9)*

## STORY 104. June 8, 1912.

### The Runaway Cabbage

Reddy Fox, hiding with Shadow the Weasel in a hollow log near Unc’ Billy Possum’s home, nudged Shadow with his elbow.

“I hear someone coming,” he whispered.

Shadow peeped out. “It’s old Mr. Toad and Prickly Porky,” he whispered back.

Something that sounded very much like a growl sounded way down deep in the throat of Reddy Fox, for Reddy has no love for Prickly Porky.

“And there comes Jimmy Skunk, with a big goose egg under each arm!” continued Shadow, smacking his lips. Reddy Fox wriggled up where he could peep out, too.

“My goodness! What’s that coming down the Lone Little Path?” whispered Reddy.

Shadow looked. Then he began to laugh, and Reddy began to laugh, too. But it was laughter that made no sound, for Reddy and Shadow didn’t want anyone to know that they were hiding there. It was a funny sight they were peeping out at. It certainly was a funny sight. Down the Lone Little Path came Peter Rabbit and his cousin, Jumper the Hare, rolling a huge cabbage.

Right at the top of a little hill the cabbage got away from them. Down it started, rolling and bounding along, with Peter Rabbit and Jumper the Hare frantically trying to catch it. Just ahead was Johnny Chuck with a big bundle of sweet clover, which he was bringing to Peter Rabbit’s party. He didn’t see the big cabbage coming. It knocked his feet from under him, and down he went with a thump, flat on his back. Right on top of him fell Jumper the Hare, who was close behind the runaway cabbage and had no time to turn aside. Over the two of them fell Peter Rabbit. Such a mix-up!

And the big cabbage kept right on running away. Jimmy Skunk, who never hurries, heard the noise behind him and turned to see what it all meant. But he didn’t have time to more than blink his eyes before the runaway cabbage hit him full in the stomach. Down went Jimmy Skunk with a grunt. One big egg flew over against a tree and broke. Jimmy landed on the other, and this broke, too.

Such a sight as Jimmy Skunk was! Egg dripped from every part of his handsome

black and white coat. It was in his eyes and all over his face and dripped from his whiskers. Shadow the Weasel and Reddy Fox, hiding in the hollow log, laughed until the tears rolled down their cheeks, though down in the heart of Shadow was bitter disappointment, for he had planned to steal those very eggs.

Just a little way beyond Jimmy Skunk the runaway cabbage brought up with a thump against a stump on which sat Striped Chipmunk, with the pockets in his cheeks filled full of yellow corn. The sudden bump of the big cabbage made Striped Chipmunk lose his balance, and off he tumbled, right down on to old Mr. Toad, who had just sat down behind the stump for a few minutes of rest. It knocked all the wind out of Mr. Toad, and of course Striped Chipmunk spilled all his corn.

Prickly Porky the Porcupine heard the noise. He looked up to see a strange thing bounding down the Lone Little Path. Prickly Porky didn't wait to see what it was. He did just what he always does when he thinks there may be danger; he rolled himself up with his face hidden in his waistcoat, and when he did that, the thousand little spears hidden in his coat stood out until he looked like a giant chestnut burr.

The runaway cabbage bounced off the stump and hit Prickly Porky. Then it stopped. Where it had touched Prickly Porky, the sharp little spears had stuck into it, so that when Peter Rabbit and Jumper the Hare hurried up, there lay the runaway cabbage, looking for all the world like a great green pincushion.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, Chapter 10)*

## STORY 105. June 10, 1912.

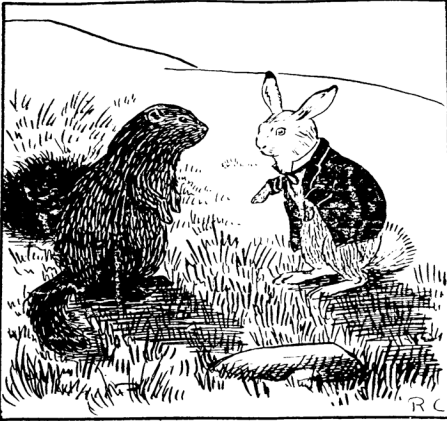
### Reddy Fox goes Hungry

Like a great green pincushion lay the runaway cabbage of Peter Rabbit and Jumper the Hare. When it had bumped into Prickly Porky, dozens of his sharp little spears had been left sticking in it, and these are what made it look like a pincushion. When it ran away downhill it had upset Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk and Striped Chipmunk, but no one was hurt. Indeed, everyone thought it was the very best joke ever. Jimmy Skunk had gone off to take a bath and get two more eggs for Peter Rabbit's party. Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel, peeping out from the hollow log where they were hiding, could see Jimmy on his way back with a big goose egg under each arm. Shadow smacked his lips. He meant to have those eggs himself.

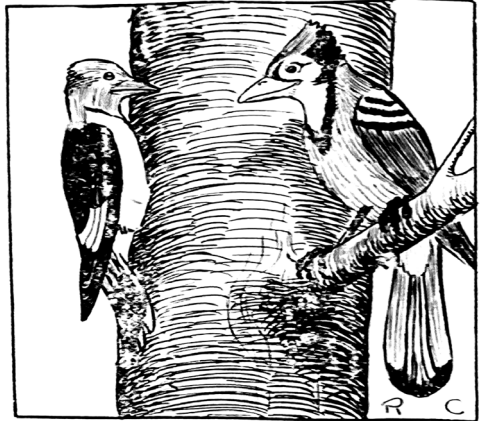
Pretty soon all the little forest and meadow people whom Peter Rabbit had invited were gathered around the foot of Unc' Billy Possum's hollow tree, and each had brought something good to eat. My, such a feast as was spread out there! Now they were waiting for Unc' Billy Possum, who had gone to meet his family, coming up from "Ol' Virginny" for this was to be a surprise party for Unc' Billy.

Over in the top of a tall pine tree Blacky the Crow was hiding and chuckling to himself as he watched. He had been invited. Neither had Reddy Fox, nor Shadow the Weasel, nor Sammy Jay, but they intended to have some of those good things just the same. In fact, they had planned to break up the party and then help themselves and they

Illustrations. June 3 to June 8, 1912.



99. Bobby Coon Takes His Own Medicine



100. Sammy Jay Learns Peter Rabbit's secret



101. Four Little Scamps Plan Mischief



102. Peter Rabbit Sends Out Word



103. Mr. Toad and Prickly Porky Put their Heads Together



104. The Runaway Cabbage



thought that their plans were working splendidly. You see, they didn't know that old Mr. Toad had overheard their plot and had told Peter Rabbit.

Reddy Fox was getting impatient. He was hungry. He had had no breakfast, and as he lay hiding in the hollow log, he could peep out and see all the good things to eat, and he could smell them, too. It seemed as if his stomach would just give him no peace at all. He wished that Sammy Jay would bring the false message that Bowser the Hound was coming, so as to frighten all the rest away.

Suddenly the light at the end of the hollow log disappeared. There was a queer rattling sound that sent shivers up and down Reddy's backbone. Prickly Porky the Porcupine had sat down with his back against the end of the hollow log, and the queer rattling sound was made by the thousand little spears in his long coat. Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel were in a prison. You see, there was no other opening to the hollow log.

"Never mind," whispered Shadow the Weasel, "he'll go away when Sammy Jay shouts that Bowser the Hound is coming."

"I'm nearly starved!" whispered Reddy Fox. "I hope Sammy Jay will hurry up."

Just then they heard Peter Rabbit's voice and the very first words Reddy Fox turned pale, and his stomach seemed to grow twice as hollow as before.

"Don't be frightened when you hear Sammy Jay screaming through the Green Forest that Bowser the Hound is coming," said Peter Rabbit, "for it's only one of Sammy Jay's jokes."

(Significantly revised for *The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum*, Chapter 11)

## STORY 106. June 11, 1912.

### Smart Sammy Jay is Fooled.

All who were invited to Peter Rabbit's surprise party, which he was giving in honor of the arrival of Unc Billy Possum's family, had arrived at the meeting place. Peter was very busy. He was so busy that he had not had time to brush his clothes.

Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel, hiding close by in a hollow log, watched Peter as he hopped from guest to guest and whispered in the ear of each. You see Reddy and Shadow had not been invited, but they were there just the same, although no one knew it excepting Blacky the Crow and Sammy Jay, who also had not been invited, and old Mr. Toad and Prickly Porky, who had found out that the other four little scamps were planning to break up the party.

"Now, I wonder what Peter Rabbit is whispering about," said Reddy, who had no breakfast and was getting very impatient as he saw all the good things that had been brought for the feast.

Blacky the Crow, hidden in the top of the tall pine, was wondering the very same thing. His sharp eyes watched Peter and every time that Peter whispered in the ear of

one of the little meadow or forest people they would laugh.

Now, Sammy Jay knew nothing about all this. It had been left to Sammy to break up Peter's party, so Sammy Jay thought it best to keep out of sight. By and by, when he thought that everyone was there, Sammy came flying through the green forest, just as if he knew nothing about Peter Rabbit's party. Now, Sammy, with all his faults, is one of the best watchmen in the Green Forest. If there is any danger which his sharp eyes discover, he always screams at the top of his lungs. So, though he steals and plays tricks and makes life very uncomfortable for the others, they always stop to listen when Sammy sounds a warning. It was because Sammy knew this that he felt sure of breaking up this party.

As soon as he came in sight of all the little meadow and forest people he began to shriek at the top of his lungs.

"Run! run! run! Here comes Bowser the Hound," he shouted.

No one moved and this puzzled Sammy so that he hardly knew what to do, but he kept right on shrieking just as if Bowser was right close at hand. Still no one moved. Sammy stopped on a tall pine and pretended to be terribly excited.

"You had better run before Bowser gets here," he shouted.

What do you think happened then? Why everybody sat up a great shout.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Peter Rabbit.

"Ho! ho! ho!" shouted Johnny Chuck.

"Hee hee hee!" giggled Danny Meadow Mouse.

"What time will Bowser get here?" asked Bobby Coon, with a very grave face.

"Tell Bowser that we are all waiting for him," added Jimmy Skunk.

"Is Bowser quite out of breath?" inquired Jerry Muskrat.

"I would like nothing better than to run a race with Bowser the Hound," said Jumper the Hare, sitting up very straight.

Sammy Jay didn't know what to do or what to say. He was just the most disgusted looking Jay that ever flew through the Green Forest, and all the time he wondered and wondered and wondered how it could be that Peter Rabbit and his friends knew that Bowser the Hound was not in the Green Forest at all.

(Significantly revised for *The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum*, Chapter 11)

## STORY 107. June 12, 1912.

### Prickly Porky Makes Himself at Home.

Peter Rabbit's party promised to be a great success. Sammy Jay had tried his best to break it up by shouting that Bowser the Hound was coming when he wasn't coming

at all. But old Mr. Toad, who had overheard Sammy Jay's plan, had told Peter Rabbit all about it, and Peter had told all the other little meadow folks and forest people, so that when Sammy gave the false alarm everybody just laughed.

Mr. Toad had also told Peter that in an old hollow log close by Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel were hiding. Peter had whispered the news in the ear of each of the little forest and meadow people and had told them how Prickly Porky was even then sitting with his back against the opening in the hollow log. Everyone had thought this the best joke ever, for, of course, they all knew that Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel could not get out past the thousand little spears hidden in the long coat of Prickly Porky.

Prickly Porky settled himself very comfortably and began to tell stories about his home, way up in the North Woods. Every few minutes he would rattle the thousand little spears in his coat, and though no one could see Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel inside the hollow log, everyone could guess just how little shivers were running up and down the backbones of the two little scamps held prisoners there.

Prickly Porky told how in the cold, cold winter the snow piled up and piled up in his far northern home, until nearly all the forest folk who lived there had to make a long journey into the South, or else went into warm, snug hollows in the trees or caves in the rocks and slept the long winter through, just as Johnny Chuck does. He told how the Indians came through the great forest on big webbed shoes, that kept them from sinking into the snow, and hunted for Lightfoot the Deer, and how they never bothered Prickly Porky, but always treated him with the greatest respect. He told so many, many interesting things about the great North Woods, that all the little meadow people and forest folk gathered close around to listen. Every few minutes, while he was talking, he would shake his thousand little spears, and then everyone would smile.

Inside the hollow log Reddy Fox was getting stiff and sore, because, you know, he didn't have room enough to even turn over. Worse still, he was so hungry that he could cry. You see, he had crept in there very early in the morning without any breakfast, because he had planned that when Sammy Jay should break up Peter Rabbit's party, he would steal all the good things he wanted. Now, he could smell them, and hear the others talking about the feast they were going to have, and he knew that not so much as a tiny, tiny crumb would be left for him, when Prickly Porky should choose to let him out.

Shadow the Weasel felt just as uncomfortable as Reddy Fox, and Shadow is very short-tempered. Every time Reddy moved and squeezed Shadow, Shadow would snap at him. Now, of course, they could hear everything that was said outside, and the things that were said were not pleasant to listen to. Bobby Coon and Billy Mink and Johnny Chuck and Little Joe Otter and Jimmy Skunk told about all the mean things and all the sharp tricks that Reddy Fox and Shadow had done. It made the two little prisoners so angry that they ground their teeth, but every time they made the least little movement, Prickly Porky would shake his thousand little spears and settle himself still more firmly against the opening in the hollow log. He certainly was enjoying himself. It tickled him almost to pieces to think how easily he had trapped smart Reddy Fox, the boaster.

So they waited all the long day for the coming of Unc' Billy Possum's family.

*(The Adventures of Unc' Billy Possum, chapter 12)*

## STORY 108. June 13, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum's Family Arrives.

Unc' Billy Possum came proudly down the Lone Little Path through the Green Forest toward the big hollow tree, which he had made his home. Peter Rabbit was the first to see him coming. Peter hurried to meet him, for you know that Peter had prepared a surprise party to greet Unc' Billy and his family.

When Unc' Billy Possum saw all the little meadow and forest people gathered there to meet him and all the good things they had brought to eat he was as surprised as Peter had hoped he would be. But Unc' Billy didn't show it. Oh, my no!, Unc' Billy never lets on that he is surprised at anything—he just grinned and grinned, as only Unc' Billy Possum can grin.

“What you'all doin' at mah hollow tree?” demanded Unc' Billy, grinning more broadly than ever.

“It's a surprise party for you and your family,” said Peter Rabbit. “We thought that Mrs. Possum and the children would be hungry, so everyone has brought something to eat. We want you to know how much we think of you and how glad we are that you are going to stay here in the Green Forest. I hope you will like the surprise party.”

Unc' Billy made a very low bow. “Ah certainly am obliged to you'all for sech a right smart welcome to mah family,” said Unc' Billy. “Ah reckon we-all are going to stay right here in the Green Forest because you-all have made it so pleasant.”

Now all this time every one had been looking for Unc' Billy's family, and Danny Meadow Mouse could hold his curiosity in no longer.

“But where is your family, Unc' Billy?” he interrupted.

Unc' Billy grinned even more broadly than he had before. “Ah done left 'em back a piece so as to see if the way was clear. Ah'll go and fetch them.”

Unc' Billy started down the Lone Little Path, hurrying as fast as he could go, and everybody gathered close around his hollow tree and watched to see his family arrive. Pretty soon they saw him coming back down the Lone Little Path, and behind him came old Mrs. Possum. She looked so much like Unc' Billy that Johnny Chuck giggled right out loud. Her gown was just as thin and just as worn and just as ruffled as Unc' Billy's old suit. Her face was just as sharp and just as crafty as Unc' Billy's. But while Unc' Billy was grinning, old Mrs. Possum had never a smile; in fact, Mrs. Possum looked cross. She looked so cross that Peter Rabbit forgot all the nice things he had planned to say to her. You see, old Mrs. Possum had had a long journey, for she had come all the way from “Ol Virginny” and she was tired. The fact is, old Mrs. Possum had not wanted to come at all.

Now, everyone had thought that Unc' Billy Possum had a big family, and when they saw no one but old Mrs. Possum looking so cross they didn't know what to make of it, but everyone was too polite to ask any questions. Each one came up in turn and was introduced by Unc' Billy. Mrs. Possum just grunted to each one until Jimmy Skunk came along. Jimmy Skunk brought with him a big goose egg and offered it to Mrs. Possum with a very, low bow. There is nothing in the world that Mrs. Possum likes better than fresh eggs, and this big goose egg made her smile in spite of herself. She just couldn't help it.

"It's fresh, and there are more where that came from," said Jimmy Skunk. "I certainly do hope you will like the Green Forest, Mrs. Possum. May I ask where your family is?"

Old Mrs. Possum's smile broadened into a grin just like Unc' Billy's, and her sharp little eyes twinkled. "Certainly, suh; they are in my pocket," said she.

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 8, as "Old Mrs. Possum's Big Pocket")*

## STORY 109. June 14, 1912.

### Old Mrs. Possum's Big Pocket.

Old Mrs. Possum had arrived in the Green Forest, coming all the way from "Ol Virginny." Peter Rabbit and all the little meadow and forest people excepting Reddy Fox, Shadow the Weasel, Blacky the Crow and Sammy Jay had been on hand to greet her with the biggest surprise party that had ever been given in the Green Forest. The surprise to Unc' Billy Possum and old Mrs. Possum had been a great success, but the real surprise came when Jimmy Skunk had asked old Mrs. Possum where her family was. When Mrs. Possum had replied that they were in her pocket no one had known what to do or what to say. Who ever heard of carrying a family in a pocket? Old Mother West Wind carries her family of Merry Little Breezes in a big bag, but a big bag and a pocket are very different things. Peter Rabbit looked at Jumper the Hare, and Jumper the Hare looked at Johnny Chuck, and Johnny Chuck looked at Jimmy Skunk, and Jimmy Skunk looked at Billy Mink, and Billy Mink looked at Jerry Muskrat and Jerry Muskrat looked at Little Joe Otter, and Little Joe Otter looked at Happy Jack Squirrel, and Happy Jack Squirrel looked at Danny Meadow Mouse, and Danny Meadow Mouse looked at old Mr. Toad, and old Mr. Toad looked at Grandfather Frog, and Grandfather Frog looked at Prickly Porky, and no one said a word. Unc' Billy Possum winked at old Mrs. Possum and both of them grinned.

Finally Peter Rabbit, whose curiosity always must be satisfied, found his tongue.

"Did-did-I understand you to say that you have brought your family in your pocket?" he asked hesitatingly.

"You certainly did, Brer Rabbit." replied old Mrs. Possum.

Everyone looked at everyone else more puzzled than before. Finally Prickly Porky cleared his throat. "Have-have you got your pocket with you?"

It was such a foolish question that everybody laughed. Unc' Billy laughed harder than anyone else, unless it was old Mrs. Possum herself.

"Of course ah brought mah pocket with me," said she. "Would you-all like to see mah family?"

"If you please," said Jimmy Skunk, who never forgets to be polite.

Old Mr. Possum climbed up on stump where all could see her. My how they did crowd around! Then very slowly she opened the big pocket in her gown and began to call one name after another. As she called, out of that big pocket popped one head after another until there were eight little heads sticking out of that big pocket and every little head was the exact image of Unc' Billy Possum.

For a few minutes no one could say a word. It was so surprising that everyone rubbed their eyes to make sure that they saw aright. Then Peter Rabbit hopped up on the very log on which Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel were kept prisoners by Prickly Porky, and Peter made a speech. It wasn't very much of a speech, but he told old Mrs. Possum how he had planned this surprise party and how the surprise was really theirs and not hers. He finished by suggesting that it was time to eat. Then everybody brought out the good things which they had prepared and all began to eat and talk at once.

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 8)*

## STORY 110. June 15, 1912.

### Farmer Brown's Boy Sees a Queer Sight.

Farmer Brown's boy was troubled. Every day when he went to collect the eggs in the hen house he found that someone had been before him. The eggs grew scarcer and scarcer and scarcer. He knew that Jimmy Skunk was not stealing them, because he had stopped up the only place where Jimmy Skunk could get in. He remembered how he had once found Unc' Billy Possum in the hen house and he suspected that Unc' Billy was stealing the eggs, though how he got in, he did not know.

The more he thought about it the more puzzled Farmer Brown's boy became. If Unc' Billy Possum was stealing the eggs, he must have a tremendous appetite to eat all of them. Finally he decided that he would go search through the Green Forest and see if he could find Unc' Billy's home. So he shouldered his gun and called Bowser the Hound, and together they started down the Lone Little Path into the Green Forest.

Pretty soon Bowser the Hound began to sniff and sniff and sniff among the leaves.

"Bow wow," said Bowser the Hound. Then he sniffed some more, and all of a sudden he roared with all his big voice, "Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow!" Off he started as fast as he could run. Farmer Brown's boy had hard work to keep up with him. Bowser the Hound had found the trail of Unc' Billy Possum.

Now, Unc' Billy had been off hunting his breakfast in one direction while old

Mrs. Possum with her family in her pocket had started off in another direction. But Unc' Billy had hard hunting, and he had walked and walked and walked all through the Green Forest until without knowing it he had come into the very part of the Green Forest where old Mrs. Possum was hunting.

When Unc' Billy heard Bowser the Hound coming, he hurried to the nearest hollow tree and was soon safely hidden inside, where he chuckled to himself as he heard Bowser's big voice barking at the foot.

Farmer Brown's boy hurried up, but when he saw the big hollow tree he knew that Unc' Billy was safe. He sat down on a stump to try to think of some plan to get Unc' Billy out, and while he thought Bowser went hunting to see what else he could find.

Suddenly Bowser's big voice rang out again, and Bowser certainly seemed very much excited. You see, he had run across the tracks of old Mrs. Possum.

Now, Mrs. Possum had someone else to think about besides herself, for she had her eight children, who had been playing about on the ground. When she heard Bowser the Hound, she knew that she must hurry to some place of safety, and the only place she could think of was the very same hollow tree in which Unc' Billy was hiding.

Of course, she didn't know that Farmer Brown's boy was sitting right close to the foot of it, and Farmer Brown's boy didn't know that there was a Mrs. Possum in the Green Forest. Suddenly he heard a rustling in the bushes, then right before his eyes up the hollow tree scrambled the funniest sight he had ever seen. At first he could not make out what it was. It looked for all the world like a whole lot of animals rolled into one. He was so surprised that he forgot all about shooting until it was too late.

What he really did see was old Mrs. Possum with her eight children clinging to her. There hadn't been time for them to get into her big pocket, so some of them had just wrapped their tails around her long tail, some of them were clinging tight to her back and some of them were hanging on around her neck.

It was so funny that Farmer Brown's boy just sat down and laughed. Pretty soon his face grew sober. "I guess," said he, slowly, "I know now where all of my eggs have gone to."

*(Mother West Wind's Neighbors, Chapter 8, as "Old Mrs. Possum's Big Pocket")*

## STORY 111. June 17, 1912.

### Digger the Badger Arrives.

The little people who live down on the Green Meadows were envious of the little folks who live in the Green Forest. It seemed as if all the newcomers made their homes in the Green Forest. There was Prickly Porky Porcupine, who came down from the North Woods, and there was Unc' Billy Possum and his family, who came up from "Ol' Virginny."

Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk and Danny Meadow Mouse sat in Johnny

Illustrations. June 10 to June 15, 1912.



105. Reddy Fox goes hungry



106. Smart Sammy Jay is fooled



107. Prickly Porky Makes himself at home



108. Unc' Billy Possum's Family Arrives



109. Old Mrs. Possum's Big Pocket



110. Farmer Brown's Boy sees a queer sight



Chuck's door yard talking it all over.

"It isn't fair," said Johnny Chuck, carefully brushing sand from the seat of his trousers. "It just isn't fair at all."

Jimmy Skunk stretched himself out lazily and yawned. "That's right, Johnny Chuck," said he. "Anyway, the Green Meadows are prettiest."

"Of course, they are," put in Danny Meadow Mouse. "Why, there isn't anything else in the world so beautiful as the Green Meadows."

"All the daisies growing near," nodded Jimmy Skunk, for he, too, thought there was nothing in the world so beautiful as the Green Meadows.

Johnny Chuck stood up and looked away across the Green Meadows to the Crooked Little Path coming down the hill. Suddenly he straightened up on tip-toes and shaded his eyes with his hands.

"Who's that coming down the Crooked Little Path?" he exclaimed.

Danny Meadow Mouse stretched as high as he could, but Danny is so short and little that though he did his best he couldn't see over the meadow grass.

"Climb up on my shoulders," said Johnny Chuck, who is always good natured. So Danny climbed up on Johnny Chuck's shoulders. He looked where Johnny Chuck pointed and then he nearly fell off, because, you know, he was so excited by what he saw.

"Hi, Jimmy Skunk! Here comes a stranger, and he's coming right straight down into the Green Meadows!" cried Danny.

Jimmy Skunk yawned. Then he got up slowly and lazily to look for himself. What he saw made him forget all about the way he had been planning. Danny Meadow Mouse was right. Coming down the Crooked Little Path was a sure enough stranger.

Nearer and nearer came the stranger. He had short legs, very short legs, but they were the stoutest legs that Johnny Chuck or Jimmy Skunk, or Danny Meadow Mouse had ever seen. And the stranger was quite as stout as his legs. He wore a grayish, coat with a light-colored waistcoat, and his face was sharp and pointed. He came along slowly, as if he had come a great way and was very, very tired. When he reached Johnny Chuck's door-yard he stopped.

"How do you do," said Johnny Chuck in his most polite manner.

"Howdy," replied the stranger gruffly.

"Have you come far?" inquired Jimmy Skunk.

The stranger sighed. "I should say I have. I've come out of the Great West," he replied.

"And may I ask who you are?" inquired Danny Meadow Mouse in his squeaky little voice.

“Sure, son,” replied the stranger, his eyes twinkling. “I’m Digger the Badger.”

## STORY 112. June 18, 1912.

### Digger the Badger Decides to Stay.

Digger the Badger crawled out from under the little brush on the edge of the Green Meadows. It was very early in the morning, so early that no one was astir but Old Mother West Wind. Digger watched her coming down from the Purple Hills with her big bag over her shoulder and wondered what she could be carrying in it.

Digger had reached the Green Meadows only the night before. He had come all the way from the Great West, and that is the reason he had slept under the little brush. You see he was a stranger there and had no home at all. He had met Johnny Chuck and Danny Meadow Mouse and Jimmy Skunk, who had been very polite, very polite indeed to him. It had pleased him so that when he had curled up under the little brush for a good night’s sleep he had almost made up his mind to stay on the Green Meadows and make his home there.

Now, as he carefully brushed his coat and smoothed all the wrinkles out of his waistcoat, he watched Old Mother West Wind, and the longer he watched the more he wondered what she could possibly have in that big bag. When she reached the middle of the Green Meadows she stopped. Then she opened her big bag, turned it upside down and shook it. Out tumbled all her children, the Merry Little Breezes, and began the funniest little dance among the buttercups and daisies, and as they danced they began to sing. Digger the Badger stopped brushing his clothes and listened, and as he listened he began to smile, for this is what he heard:

We’re the Merry Little Breezes,  
And we love to romp and play.  
We’re the Merry Little Breezes,  
And we’re happy all the day.  
Oh, we love the pretty flowers,  
And the little birds that sing.  
And we love the sun and showers  
Of the summer and the spring.  
So we play and romp and frolic  
From dawn till day is through,  
But most of all we’re happy  
When there’s some deed to do.

“That settles it,” said Digger the Badger right out of hand. “That settles it. I’m going to make my home right here on the Green Meadows.”

“Is that so? Who invited you to, I want to know?”

Digger whirled around. There sat Reddy Fox. Reddy had swelled himself up to look as big as he could, and was trying hard to look very fierce, for you know Reddy Fox is a bully. But all the time he was taking, great care not to come too near, for

bullies are almost always cowards.

Digger the Badger grinned. "I reckon it isn't any of your business who invited me," said he. "I'm going to make my home right where I please."

"You can't unless I say so," replied Reddy Fox, showing his teeth.

Then Digger the Badger opened his mouth and yawned. Yes, sir, he yawned right in the face of Reddy Fox. And when he yawned Reddy saw such long, strong teeth that he backed away just a little. But still he tried to appear very fierce and important.

"You can't unless I say so," he repeated.

Digger the Badger looked at him a whole minute. Then suddenly he threw a whole handful of sand right in the face of Reddy Fox.

"Bah!" shouted Digger the Badger. What do you think Reddy Fox did? Why, he put his tail between his legs and just sneaked away. And all the time he could hear Digger the Badger laughing fit to kill himself.

(Published as one-story booklet by John H. Eggers, 1924)

## STORY 113. June 19, 1912.

### Digger Makes a Home

Digger the Badger was busy. He so busy that he could hardly stop to brush the sand out of his hair. From the corners of his eyes he could see the little meadow and forest people gathering around to watch. And as he worked he sang and this was his song:

"Dig, dig, dig! I make the sand to fly,  
The yellow sand, the golden sand, I toss it up and high.  
And deep, deep down way underground my home so snug is always found."

Peter Rabbit was the first to discover Digger at work. Peter's eyes opened wide. Never in his life had he seen sand fly so. When he had first seen it he didn't know what to make of it. He had been coming down the Lone Little Path. Looking across the Green Meadows he had seen the sand flying in a perfect shower, and he couldn't see what made it fly. At first he thought that Johnny Chuck must be at work on a new house. But Johnny Chuck never had made the sand fly like that, never in the world, not even when he had won a digging match from Reddy Fox.

Peter hitched up his trousers and hurried over toward the flying sand, lipperty, lipperty, lip, as fast as he could go. When he got there nothing was to be seen but a hole in the ground out of which the sand poured in such a steady stream that it seemed to Peter that there must be several diggers at work down underground.

In a few minutes the sand stopped flying and Peter saw a pair of stout legs and the seat of a pair of pants, very much covered with sand, coming up out of the hole. Peter's big eyes nearly popped out of his head, for Peter did not recognize those stout legs at all, and he was sure that he never had seen that pair of pants before. Who could it be?

Peter grew nervous and ran back a little way. Then he sat up very straight with eyes and mouth wide open and his heart going pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, while he watched. You see he didn't know but this stranger might be dangerous.

In a minute out backed Digger the Badger and shook the sand out of his clothes. Then he turned and saw Peter Rabbit with eyes popping out and mouth wide open, and Peter looked so funny and foolish that Digger the Badger couldn't help laughing right out.

"Howdy, friend?" said Digger the Badger. "You must be a little cousin of big Jack Rabbit, who lives out where I came from."

Peter closed his mouth and found his tongue.

"I'm Peter Rabbit, and I have a cousin Jack who lives way out West and whom I never have seen. May I ask you who you are and where you come from?" said he.

"Sure, sure!" replied Digger heartily. "I'm old man Badger and I've come from the Great West, and now I'm going to live on the Green Meadows. I'm very fond of your Cousin Jack, and I guess you and I are going to get along fine. Will you shake hands?"

"I'm sure we are," replied Peter, holding out his hand. And Digger the Badger shook it so hard that Peter afterward declared that it was lame for a week.

## STORY 114. June 20, 1912.

### Bowser the Hound Meets his Match

Peter Rabbit and Digger the Badger had become the best of friends. Every morning Peter stopped at Digger's new home to tell him the news of the Green Meadows, for Digger was so busy that he had little time to go about. Then Peter, who is a great gossip, would go about among his neighbors and tell them what a fine fellow Digger the Badger is.

Now, on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest no one is feared like Bowser the Hound. When his voice comes booming on the air all the little meadow and forest people, excepting those who fly, shiver and hide, all but Prickly Porky the Porcupine, who knows his thousand little spears will protect him, and Unc' Billy Possum, who one time fooled Bowser and is sure that he can do it again. So when Peter Rabbit boasted about Digger the Badger and what a big, strong fellow he is, Peter's neighbors shook their heads and said, "Wait until he meets Bowser the Hound. Just wait. Then we will see."

Of course, Peter told Digger all about Bowser the Hound and what a terrible fellow he is. Digger Just laughed.

"I'm not afraid," said he.

"But you don't know him. You just better watch out!"

Then one day when jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was smiling his broadest Bowser the Hound took it into his head to go down the Lone Little Path into the Green Meadows,

and there he surprised Digger the Badger out for a walk. Bowser stopped and picked up his ears. He had never before seen such a queer fellow, and he didn't know just what to make of him, for Digger just stood still and grinned at him until he showed all his teeth.

"Bow, wow, wow!" shouted Bowser in his deepest voice that carried terror to all the little forest and meadow people.

Still Digger the Badger just grinned. The hair stood up on Bowser's neck and back until he looked very fierce and savage.

"You had better be afraid of me," growled Bowser in a deep voice.

"But I'm not," said Digger the Badger, "not the least little bit."

"Then I'll make you afraid," snarled Bowser, springing on Digger the Badger.

Then followed such a fight as the Green Meadows had never seen. The Merry Little Breezes spread the news of it, and soon all the little meadow and forest people were gathered about in a great circle.

Over and over in the meadow grass rolled Bowser the Hound and Digger the Badger, snarling and growling and biting and clawing. Soon Bowser's smooth glossy coat was torn and Digger's gray coat was in tatters.

Reddy Fox watched from a safe distance and grinned. "Now," thought Reddy, "this will be the end of Digger the Badger, and I'm glad of it."

But it wasn't the end of Digger. Oh, my, no! The first thing they all knew Bowser the Hound was actually running away. Yes, sir, with his tail between his legs Bowser the Hound was hurrying up the Lone Little Path, whimpering, with the tears rolling down his cheeks. The little meadow and forest people looked at each other, They could hardly believe their eyes. Then they gave a great shout and all hurried up to shake hands with Digger the Badger and tell him what a wonderful fellow he was—all but Reddy Fox, who ground his teeth and sneaked off in disappointment.

## STORY 115. June 21, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Plans Trouble for Digger

Digger the Badger was the hero of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. He had met and fought Bowser the Hound and had sent Bowser home with his tail between his legs. Reddy Fox had been there and had seen the great fight, and Reddy had gone home all out of sorts. You see, when Digger the Badger had first come to live on the Green Meadows, Reddy Fox had tried to bully him, and Digger had just laughed, so Reddy had hoped that Bowser would whip Digger.

Reddy sat on his doorstep thinking it over and wondering what he could do to make it so uncomfortable for Digger the Badger that he would leave the Green Meadows. Reddy is never happy unless he is planning mischief or trouble for someone else. He was thinking so hard that he had actually forgotten to get his breakfast, and that is something Reddy Fox very seldom forgets.

If Bowser the Hound could not frighten Digger, who could? Reddy thought and thought and thought, and suddenly he saw way over on the edge of Farmer Brown's cornfield an old straw hat moving along above the corn tops.

"Ha!" said Reddy Fox; "I have an idea!"

He jumped to his feet and ran up the Crooked Little Path to the top of the hill, where he could look over to the new home of Digger the Badger.

There sat Digger taking a sun bath on his doorstep. Reddy grinned wickedly, then he hurried down the Crooked Little Path and over toward Farmer Brown's cornfield. When he was almost there he began to creep very carefully through the grass to a place where he could peep through the bushes and still not be seen. It was just as he had hoped it would be. There was Farmer Brown's boy hoeing the corn, and he had no gun with him. He was whistling as he worked, and this time there was no Bowser the Hound to worry Reddy.

Reddy Fox walked right out in plain sight and trotted along just as if he didn't see Farmer Brown's boy at all. He trotted very slowly. The whistling stopped. Reddy knew without looking that Farmer Brown's boy had seen him. Reddy trotted a little way and then sat down and pretended to be watching for a field mouse. All the time he was watching Farmer Brown's boy out of the corner of one eye. He saw Farmer Brown's boy lay down his hoe and carefully climb over the fence. Then he saw him stealing up step by step as carefully as he knew how.

Reddy trotted a little farther ahead and sat down again. He never once turned his head, and he knew that Farmer Brown's boy thought that he didn't know that anyone was following him. So, little by little Reddy led Farmer Brown's boy away from the cornfield and over toward the new home of Digger the Badger. He took great care that Digger the Badger should not see him coming. When he got near enough so that he was sure Farmer Brown's boy would see Digger's new home, Reddy slipped behind some bushes and then away he ran as fast as he could for the Crooked Little Path up the hill, where he could watch all that would happen, and as he ran Reddy chuckled to himself:

"Now," said he, "we'll see if Mr. Digger is smart enough to fool Farmer Brown's boy."

STORY 116. June 22, 1912.

## Farmer Brown's Boy Makes a Discovery

Farmer Brown's boy had followed Reddy Fox across the Green Meadows. He thought all the time that Reddy Fox did not know that he was following him. He had seen Reddy slip behind some bushes and he had crept up very, very carefully to see how close he could get to Reddy. Just imagine how surprised he was when he peeped over the bushes to find no trace of Reddy at all. You see, Reddy had known that Farmer Brown's boy was following him, and when he slipped behind the bushes he had to run as fast as he could, and that is very fast indeed.

Farmer Brown's boy looked this way and looked that way, and then he stood up and fanned himself with his big straw hat, for it was very warm. "I wonder," said Farmer Brown's boy, "where that Fox has gone to. I don't see his home anywhere around here."

Just then a heap of sand caught his eye. It was fresh yellow sand, and looked as if it had just been thrown up there.

"Hello!" exclaimed Farmer Brown's boy, "I guess I have found his hole after all. I'll just put a trap there and then we will see if Mr. Fox will steal any more of my chickens."

He walked over to the heap of shining sand and stooped over to examine it. He was looking for the footprints of Reddy Fox. But he didn't find them there. Oh, my no! You see it was not Reddy's home at all.

Now, Farmer Brown's boy knows all about how foxes and woodchucks and skunks build their homes, and this one was different from any he had seen. The more he studied it the more puzzled he became. He got down on his hands and knees and studied the foot-prints that led into the hole just beyond the shining heap of sand. The more he studied them the more puzzled he grew. He had never seen any footprints like them. They were not at all like those of Reddy Fox or those of Jimmy Skunk. Neither were they like those of Johnny Chuck.

Farmer Brown's boy sat down and wiped his face with a big red handkerchief.

"I don't know," said he, "I certainly don't know what has made this hole unless it is the biggest woodchuck that ever came on to the Green Meadows. I guess I'll just watch a little while and see if the old fellow I will not come out."

So Farmer Brown's boy lay down in the long meadow grass and made himself as comfortable as he could and watched, and watched, the hole and the shining heap of sand. It was very warm, and pretty soon Farmer Brown's boy grew sleepy. His head began to nod. Jolly round red Mr. Sun looking down from the blue sky smiled more broadly than ever, for this is what he saw: Farmer Brown's boy fast asleep, and just a little way off, also lying flat in the grass, Digger the Badger, who had been right close to Farmer Brown's boy all the time, and whose new home it was that Farmer Brown's boy had discovered. And jolly round Mr. Sun saw more; he saw Farmer Brown coming down in his cornfield straight over to where Farmer Brown's boy had left his hoe when he followed Reddy Fox.

## STORY 117. June 24, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck Grows Jealous

Johnny Chuck is usually very happy. In fact, Johnny Chuck long ago discovered the best thing in the world, which is contentment. He has always been satisfied to sit on his doorstep and smile as he watched the world go by, but now a little bit of discontent had crept into Johnny Chuck's peace of mind. The fact is Johnny Chuck has become

just a wee, wee bit jealous.

Now jealousy is like the weeds that grow in the garden. You know they start from tiny, tiny seeds, and when they come through the brown earth they are just tiny, tiny plants, but they grow so fast that pretty soon they are great big plants that the farmer has to go along and hoe out. At first Johnny Chuck was just a little bit troubled. It didn't amount to much, but he couldn't keep it out of his mind, and the more he thought about it the bigger the trouble grew.

Now what do you suppose it was all about? Why, it was just because he had found someone who could dig faster than he could. Johnny Chuck is a wonderful digger. My, my how he can make the sand fly when he wants to try. He had been very proud because no one else could dig as fast as he could. Peter Rabbit could run faster than he. Happy Jack Squirrel could climb a tree faster than anyone else; Little Joe Otter was the fastest swimmer in the Swimming Pool, but Johnny Chuck didn't care, for no one else had ever been able to dig a hole as fast as he could.

Now there was a newcomer on the Green Meadows. Johnny Chuck had been the first one to welcome him and had been very polite and nice to him and right down in his heart Johnny was very proud of him, but the newcomer could dig. My goodness! how he could dig! In fact his name was Digger the Badger.

So Johnny Chuck sat on his door-step and forgot to smile. He was actually jealous of Digger the Badger. The Merry Little Breezes danced across the Green Meadows and pulled Johnny's whiskers and rumbled his hair. They actually didn't know what to make of it when Johnny Chuck refused to play with them, but just sat and smiled and sulked. Peter Rabbit came hopping along and invited Johnny Chuck to go down to the sweet clover patch, but Johnny refused and just sulked and sulked and sulked. Jimmy Skunk came over to tell him of some tender young cabbage which he had discovered in Farmer Brown's garden, but even that didn't interest Johnny Chuck.

It grew worse and worse every day until all the little meadow people knew that something was wrong with Johnny Chuck. He grew so cross that no one could get a pleasant word from him and then something happened. It all happened through Digger the Badger.

STORY 118. June 25, 1912.

## Digger the Badger Shames Johnny Chuck

Johnny Chuck had been in the sulks for days and days and days. He was too cross to be spoken to. No one knew what to make of it, for Johnny Chuck is usually the happiest and best natured little fellow in the world. The fact is Johnny Chuck was jealous. He was jealous of Digger the Badger because Digger could make a hole in the ground faster than he could.

So Johnny Chuck sat on his doorstep and sulked until all his friends and neighbors went out of their way to keep from going by his house. Now, all this time Old Man Badger, who is called Digger, had been so busy in his new home on the Green



Meadows that he had not had time to call on Johnny Chuck, and he had not heard a word about the way Johnny Chuck was feeling. Then one day Digger found he had a little time with nothing to do.

“I’ll just go call on Johnny Chuck, and take him a bundle of tender young cabbage leaves from Farmer Brown’s garden,” said he to himself.

Now, when Digger the Badger thinks of a thing he does it. He hurried over to Farmer Brown’s garden and picked out the nicest, tenderest young cabbage leaves that he could find. He rolled them up in a bundle and tucked them under one arm, and off he started up the Lone Little Path.

When he came in sight of Johnny Chuck’s house, Johnny Chuck was sitting on his doorstep looking as if he had lost his last friend. He was so busy thinking mean, jealous thoughts that he did not see his visitor approaching.

“Good afternoon, Johnny Chuck,” said Digger, as he took his hat off and fanned himself.

Johnny Chuck just grunted, for Digger the Badger was the last one in the world that he wanted to see.

“I haven’t forgotten how nice you were to me when I first arrived on the Green Meadows,” said Digger, “This afternoon I was going by Farmer Brown’s garden and I saw some delicious tender young cabbage. It looked to me just as if it was grown especially for someone I know by the name of Johnny Chuck, so I brought an armful along.”

Johnny Chuck felt his mouth begin to water. He could smell that young cabbage, and in spite of himself, his little black nose would keep wrinkling. It was hard work, oh, dreadfully hard work, to keep sulky and cross and Jealous with the smell of that young cabbage tickling his nose.

“I don’t believe I care for young cabbage,” said Johnny Chuck, and all the time he knew that he was telling a story.

Digger the Badger looked at Johnny Chuck out of his shrewd little eyes. “It’s a fine afternoon for a walk,” said he, “and I must be moving along. I hope you’ll come down and see my new house pretty soon, Johnny Chuck.”

And with that Digger the Badger put on his hat and started off down the Lone Little Path. Johnny Chuck watched him go, then he looked at the bundle of tender young cabbage left behind, and in spite of himself he smiled, and with that first smile away melted all Johnny Chuck’s sulkiness and ill humor.

## STORY 119. June 26, 1912.

### Grandfather Frog Loses a Race<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The pre-print was mistakenly titled, “Grandfather Frog Wins a Race,” which was corrected in some, but not all, newspapers.

Grandfather Frog and his cousin, Old Mr. Toad, had had a falling out. It all came about by Peter Rabbit's saying that old Mr. Toad was smarter for his age than Grandfather Frog. The Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind told Grandfather Frog what Peter Rabbit had said. Now, Grandfather Frog will never admit that he is growing old.

"Pooh!" said he, "my cousin, old Mr. Toad, lives on the land and I live in the water, but I can travel faster on land now than he can."

Of course, the Merry Little Breezes had to run right over and hunt up Old Mr. Toad and tell him what Grandfather Frog had said, and of course, Old Mr. Toad was indignant, very indignant indeed.

"It is no such thing," said Old Mr. Toad. "My cousin, Grandfather Frog, is growing foolish in his old age."

Away hurried the Merry Little Breezes and told this to Grandfather Frog, and, of course, Grandfather Frog in his turn grew indignant and said some more things about his cousin, Old Mr. Toad. Finally Blacky the Crow, who had heard all about the quarrel, proposed that they settle the question once for all by having a race on the Green Meadows.

That was the funniest race that was ever seen. Grandfather Frog and old Mr. Toad, each puffed up and swelled out with indignation, stood with their front toes on the edge of a line which Johnny Chuck had drawn. Blacky the Crow sat in the top of a butternut tree as judge.

"Are you ready?" asked Blacky the Crow. Grandfather Frog and Old Mr. Toad said they were ready.

"Go!" said Blacky.

Off started Grandfather Frog and Old Mr. Toad. Grandfather Frog's legs are longest, and in a few minutes he was ahead of Old M. Toad. Such a funny race as it was! All the little meadow and forest people ran along beside the two racers and shouted encouragement.

"Go it, Grandfather Frog, go it!" shouted Billy Mink.

"Hurry up, Old Mr. Toad, hurry up!" shouted Johnny Chuck.

Poor old Mr. Toad did his best, but in spite of all he could do Grandfather Frog was winning the race. Then Peter Rabbit, out of pure mischief, shouted, "Look out, Mr. Toad, here comes Mr. Blacksnake!"

Mr. Toad heard him. Now, if there is any one thing in all the wide, wide world that frightens Mr. Toad it is the suspicion that Mr. Blacksnake is anywhere near. When he heard Peter Rabbit shout that, he forgot all about the race, he forgot everything except that he must get away from Mr. Blacksnake. He just went twice as fast as he was going before, and the first thing he knew he heard a great shout from all the little meadow people and forest folk, for he had crossed the line ahead of Grandfather Frog. And the joke of it all is that he didn't stop then; he just kept on going with funny, funny hops

until Peter Rabbit caught up with him and told him it was all a joke.

## STORY 120. June 27, 1912.

### Grandfather Frog has a Grouch

Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily pad in the Smiling Pool. Grandfather Frog was out of sorts. In fact, he had the very worst kind of a grouch. Now, a grouch is a very bad thing to have; it makes everyone uncomfortable, and no one likes to come anywhere near one who is grouchy.

So Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily pad and couldn't see that jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was smiling, nor that the Merry Little Breezes were playing in the meadow grass, nor could he hear the birds singing, or the bees humming. In fact, he was so grouchy that he let three foolish green flies go right past his nose, and what do you think it was all about? Why, it was just because his cousin, old Mr. Toad, had beat him in a race the day before.

It had been a funny race, the funniest race that the Green Meadows had ever seen. Grandfather Frog's legs are longer than those of his cousin, old Mr. Toad, and Grandfather Frog had been so sure that he would win that race that even now it was hard work for him to believe that he had lost. The reason that he had lost was because Peter Rabbit had hopped up behind old Mr. Toad and shouted in his ear that Mr. Blacksnake was coming. Now, there is nothing in the world that so frightens old Mr. Toad as the thought that Mr. Blacksnake is somewhere near, and when he heard Peter shout that he hopped so fast that he passed Grandfather Frog and won the race.

Of course, all the little meadow and forest people teased Grandfather Frog almost to death. They teased him so much that Grandfather Frog quite lost his temper, and this is the reason that he sat on his big green lily pad and was so grouchy that even the Merry Little Breezes kept away from the Smiling Pool.

"It wasn't fair, it wasn't fair at all," grumbled Grandfather Frog to himself. "I can beat old Mr. Toad every day in the week, and he knows it."

Just then he saw his cousin, old Mr. Toad, coming down to the edge of the Smiling Pool. Grandfather shook his fist. Yes, sir, he actually shook his fist<sup>25</sup> at his cousin, old Mr. Toad. And when old Mr. Toad just grinned at him Grandfather Frog hopped up and shook both fists. Old Mr. Toad said nothing, he just grinned and grinned. The more he grinned the angrier Grandfather Frog became.

"I'll race you again right now," shouted Grandfather Frog.

Now, Peter Rabbit had come down to the edge of the Smiling Pool without being seen, and when he heard Grandfather Frog say that, Peter just stole around behind old Mr. Toad and shouted, just as he had the day before, "Here comes Mr. Blacksnake!"

Off started Mr. Toad, just as he had the day before, without turning to see what was behind him. Grandfather Frog watched him go, and then all of a sudden Grandfather

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opened his big mouth just as wide as he could and began to laugh.

“Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! He, he, he!” shouted Grandfather Frog, and held on to his sides. You see he had just realized for the first time what a joke it all was, and it tickled him so that he nearly split his sides laughing.

And that was the end of Grandfather Frog’s grouch.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #31)*

## STORY 121. June 28, 1912.

### Reddy Invites Peter Rabbit to Take a Walk

Old Granny Fox was not feeling well. For three days she had been unable to go out hunting, and for three days Reddy Fox had tried to find something to tempt Granny’s appetite. He had brought in a tender young chicken from Farmer Brown’s hen yard, and he had stolen a plump trout from Billy Mink’s storehouse, but Granny had just turned up her nose.

“What I need,” said Granny Fox, “is a tender young rabbit.”

Now, Reddy Fox is very fond of Granny Fox, and when she said that she needed a tender young rabbit, Reddy made up his mind that he would get it for her, though how he was going to do it he didn’t know. Dozens of times he had tried to catch Peter Rabbit, and every time Peter’s long legs had taken him to a place of safety. “I’ll just have to fool Peter Rabbit,” said Reddy Fox, as he sat on his door-steps and looked over the Green Meadows.

Reddy Fox is very sly. He is so sly that it is hard work to be sure when he is honest and when he is playing a trick. As he sat on his door-steps, looking across the Green Meadows, he saw the Merry Little Breezes coming his way. Reddy smiled to himself. When they got near enough, he shouted to them.

“Will you do something for me?” he asked. “Of course we will,” shouted the Merry Little Breezes, who are always delighted to do something for others.

“I wish you would find Peter Rabbit and tell him that I have found a new bed of tender young carrots in Farmer Brown’s garden, and invite him to go there with me tomorrow morning at sun-up,” said Reddy Fox.

Away raced the Merry Little Breezes to find Peter Rabbit and give him the invitation of Reddy Fox. Pretty soon back they came to tell Reddy that Peter Rabbit would be delighted to meet Reddy on the edge of the Old Briar-patch at sun-up the next morning, and go with him to get some tender young carrots. Reddy smiled to himself, for now he was sure that he would get Peter Rabbit for Granny’s breakfast.

Early the next morning, just before sun-up, Reddy Fox started down the Lone Little Path and hurried across the Green Meadows to the Old Briar-patch. Reddy was dressed in his very best suit of clothes, and very smart and handsome he looked. When he reached the Old Briar-patch he could see nothing of Peter Rabbit. He waited

and waited and waited, but still Peter Rabbit did not come. Finally he gave it up and decided that he would go over and have a look at the young carrots in Farmer Brown's garden. When he got there, what do you think he saw? Why, all around that bed of tender young carrots were footprints, and the footprints were Peter Rabbit's!

Reddy Fox ground his teeth and snarled wickedly, for he knew then that instead of fooling Peter Rabbit, Peter Rabbit had fooled him. Just then up came one of the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind.

"Good morning, Reddy Fox," said the Merry Little Breeze. "Good morning," replied Reddy Fox, and if you could have seen him and heard him, you would never have suspected how ill-tempered he was feeling.

"Peter Rabbit asked me to come and tell you that he is very sorry that he could not meet you at the Briar-patch this morning, but that he grew so hungry thinking of those tender young carrots that he just had to come and get some before sun-up, and he is very much obliged to you for telling him about them. He says they are the finest young carrots that he has ever tasted," said the Merry Little Breeze.

The heart of Reddy Fox was filled with rage, but he did not let the Merry Little Breeze know it. He just smiled and sent the Merry Little Breeze back to Peter Rabbit to tell him how glad he was that Peter enjoyed the carrots, and to invite Peter to meet him the next morning on the edge of the Old Briar-patch at sun-up, to go with him to a patch of sweet clover which he had just found near the old hickory tree.

The Merry Little Breeze danced off with the message. Pretty soon he was back to say that Peter Rabbit would be delighted to go to the sweet clover patch the next morning.

Reddy grinned as he trudged off home. "I'll just be at the clover patch an hour before sun-up tomorrow morning, and then we'll see!" he said to himself.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, chapter 7)*

## STORY 122. June 29, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Gets an Early Breakfast

Peter Rabbit crept out of his snug little bed two hours before sun-up and hurried over to the big hickory-tree. Sure enough, right near it, he found a beautiful bed of sweet clover, just as Reddy Fox had said was there. Peter chuckled to himself as he ate and ate and ate, until his little round stomach was so full that he could hardly hop.

When he had eaten all that he could, he hurried back to the old brier-patch to finish his morning nap, and all the time he kept chuckling to himself. You see, Reddy Fox had invited Peter to meet him at sun-up on the edge of the old brier patch to go over to the sweet clover bed, but Peter was suspicious, and so he had gone over to the sweet clover bed alone two hours before sun-up.

Now Reddy Fox had been fooled by Peter Rabbit the day before, and so this

Illustrations. June 24 to June 29, 1912.



117. Johnny Chuck Grows Jealous



118. Digger the Badger Shames Johnny Chuck



119. Grandfather Frog Loses a Race



120. Grandfather Frog Has a Grouch



121. Reddy Fox Invites Peter Rabbit to Take a Walk



122. Peter Rabbit Gets an Early Breakfast

morning he got up early and hurried over to the sweet clover bed an hour before sun-up. In fact, Peter Rabbit had hardly left the sweet clover bed when Reddy Fox arrived. Reddy lay down in the long meadow grass and grinned to himself as he waited. Slowly the minutes went by, until up from behind the Purple Hills came jolly, round, red Mr. Sun—and still no Peter Rabbit. Reddy stopped grinning. “Perhaps,” said he to himself, “Peter is waiting for me on the edge of the old brier patch.”

So Reddy hurried over to the old brier patch, and sure enough there was Peter Rabbit sitting on the edge of it. When Peter saw him coming, he dodged in behind a big clump of friendly old brambles. Reddy came up with his broadest smile.

“Good morning, Peter Rabbit,” said Reddy. “Shall we go over to that sweet clover bed?”

Peter put one hand over his mouth to hide a smile. “Oh,” said he, “I was so dreadfully hungry for sweet clover that I couldn’t wait until sun-up, and so I went over two hours ago. I hope you will excuse me, Reddy Fox. I certainly do appreciate your kindness in telling me of that new, sweet clover bed and I hope I have not put you out.”

“Certainly not,” replied Reddy Fox, in his pleasantest manner, and you know Reddy Fox can be very pleasant indeed when he wants to be. “It is a very great pleasure to be able to give you pleasure. There is nothing I so like to do as to give pleasure to others. By the way, I have just heard that Farmer Brown has a new planting of young cabbage in the corner of his garden. Will you meet me here at sun-up tomorrow morning to go over there?”

“I will be delighted to, I will indeed!” replied Peter Rabbit, and all the time he smiled to himself behind his hand.

Reddy Fox bade Peter Rabbit good-by in the pleasantest way you can imagine, yet all the time, down in his heart, Reddy was so angry that he hardly knew what to do, for you see he had got to go back to Granny Fox without the tender young rabbit which he had promised her.

“This time I will be there two hours before sun-up, and then we will see, Peter Rabbit, who is the smartest!” said Reddy Fox to himself.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, chapter 8)*

## STORY 123. July 1, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Gets a Scare.

Peter Rabbit looked up at the silvery moon and laughed aloud. Then he kicked up his heels and laughed again as he started out across the Green Meadows towards Farmer Brown’s garden. You see, Reddy Fox had found a new planting of tender young cabbage there, and had invited Peter to visit it with him at sun up the next morning.

Now, Peter was suspicious, very suspicious indeed of Reddy Fox. So, as it was a beautiful night for a walk, he thought he would just run over to Farmer Brown’s garden

and see if he could find that bed of newly planted cabbage.

So Peter hopped and skipped across the Green Meadows, singing as he went;

“Hold, ol’ Miss Moon, hold up your light!  
Show the way! show the way!  
The little stars are shining bright  
And Night folks all are out to play.”

When Peter reached Farmer Brown’s garden, he had no trouble in finding the new planting of cabbage. It was tender. It was good. My, how good it was! Peter started in to fill his little round stomach. He ate and ate and ate! By and by, just when he thought he couldn’t eat another mouthful, he happened to look over to a patch of moonlight. For just a minute Peter’s heart stopped beating. There was Reddy Fox coming straight over to the new cabbage bed!

Peter Rabbit didn’t know what to do. Reddy Fox hadn’t seen him yet, but he would in a minute or two, unless Peter could hide. He was too far from the dear old brier patch to run there. Peter looked this way and looked that way. Ha! There lay Farmer Brown’s boy’s old straw hat, just where he had left it when the supper horn blew. Peter crawled under it. It covered him completely.

Peter peeped out from under one edge. He saw Reddy Fox standing in the moonlight, looking at the bed of newly set cabbage. Reddy was smiling as if his thoughts were very pleasant. Peter shivered. He could just guess what Reddy was thinking. Reddy had invited Peter to come with him to this very place at sun-up the next morning and Peter suspected that Reddy was even now thinking how he would gobble up Peter, when once he got him away from the safety of the old brier-patch.

The thought made Peter so indignant that he forgot that he was hiding, and he sat up on his hind legs. Of course, he lifted the straw hat with him. Then he remembered and sat down again in a hurry. Of course, the straw hat went down quite as quickly.

Presently Peter peeped out. Reddy Fox was staring and staring at the old straw hat, and he wasn’t smiling now. He actually looked frightened. It gave Peter an idea. He made three long hops straight towards Reddy Fox, all the time keeping the old straw hat over him. Of course the hat went along with him, and, because it covered Peter all up, it looked for all the world as if the hat was alive.

Reddy Fox gave one more long look at the strange thing coming towards him through the cabbage bed, and then he started for home as fast as he could go, his tail between his legs.

Peter Rabbit just lay down right where he was and laughed and laughed. And it almost seemed as if the old straw hat laughed too.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, chapter 9)*



STORY 124. July 2, 1912.

## Peter Rabbit Has a Great Laugh.

It was just sun-up as Reddy Fox started down the Lone Little Path to the Green Meadows. Reddy was late. He should be over at the old briar patch by this time. He had invited Peter Rabbit to meet him there. He was afraid now that, because he was late, Peter would not be there. When he came in sight of the old briar patch, there sat Peter on the edge of it.

“Good morning, Peter Rabbit,” said Reddy Fox, in his politest manner. “I am sorry to have kept you waiting; it is all because I had a terrible fright last night.”

“Is that so? What was it?” asked Peter, ducking down behind a big bramble bush to hide his smile.

“Why, I went over to Farmer Brown’s garden to see if that new planting of young cabbage was all right, and there I met a terrible monster. It frightened me so that I did not dare to come out this morning until jolly, round Mr. Sun had begun to climb up in the sky, and so I am a little late. Are you ready, Peter Rabbit, to go up to the new planting of young cabbage with me?” asked Reddy, in his pleasantest manner.

Now, what do you think Peter Rabbit did? Why, Peter just began to laugh. He laughed and halloed and shouted. He lay down on his back and kicked his heels for very joy. But all the time he took care to keep behind a big, friendly bramble bush.

Reddy Fox stared at Peter Rabbit. He just didn’t know what to make of it. He began to think that Peter had gone crazy. He couldn’t see a thing to laugh at, yet here was Peter laughing fit to kill himself. Finally he stopped and sat up.

“Did—did—the monster catch you, Reddy Fox?” he asked, wiping his eyes.

“No,” replied Reddy, “it didn’t catch me, because I could run faster than it could, but it chased me all the way home.”

“In that case, I think I’ll not go up to the cabbage bed this morning, for you know I cannot run as fast as you can, Reddy, and the monster might catch me,” replied Peter, very gravely. “Besides,” he added, “I have had my fill of tender young cabbage, and it was very nice indeed.”

“What!” shouted Reddy Fox.

“Yes,” continued Peter Rabbit, “I just couldn’t wait till morning, so I went up there early last night. I’m much obliged to you for telling me of it, Reddy Fox; I am indeed.”

For just a little minute an ugly look crept into Reddy’s face, for now he knew that once more Peter Rabbit had fooled him. But he kept his temper and managed to smile, as he said:

“Oh, don’t mention it, Peter Rabbit, don’t mention it. But tell me, didn’t you meet the monster?”

“No,” replied Peter Rabbit. And then, do what he would, he couldn’t keep sober another minute, but began to laugh just as he had before.

“What’s the joke, Peter Rabbit? Tell me so that I can laugh too,” begged Reddy Fox.

“Why,” said Peter Rabbit, when he could get his breath, “the joke is that the monster that frightened you so was the old straw hat of Farmer Brown’s boy, and I was underneath it. Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!”

Then Reddy Fox knew just how badly Peter Rabbit had fooled him. With a snarl he sprang right over the bramble bush at Peter Rabbit, but Peter was watching and darted away along one of his own special little paths through the old brier patch. Reddy tried to follow, but the brambles tore his clothes and scratched his face and stuck in his feet. Finally he had to give it up. Torn and bleeding and angry, he turned back home, and as he left the Old Briar-patch, he could still hear Peter Rabbit laughing.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 10, “Peter Rabbit has Another Great Laugh”)*

## STORY 125. July 3, 1912.

### Shadow the Weasel Gets Lost.

All the Green Meadows had heard how Peter Rabbit had frightened Reddy Fox with an old straw hat, and everywhere that Reddy went someone was sure to shout after him:

“Reddy Fox is fine to see;  
He’s as brave as brave can be  
Till he meets an old straw hat,  
Then he don’t know where he’s at!”

Then Reddy would lose his temper and chase his tormentors. Most of all, he wanted to catch Peter Rabbit. He lay in wait for Peter in fence corners and behind bushes and trees, but somehow Peter seemed always to know that Reddy was there.

In the old brier patch Peter was safe. Reddy had tried to follow him there, but he had found that it was of no use at all. Peter’s paths were so narrow, and the brambles tore Reddy’s clothes and scratched him so, that he had to give it up. Reddy was thinking of this one day as he sat on his doorstep, scowling over at the old brier patch, and then all of a sudden he thought of Shadow the Weasel. Shadow is so slim that he can go almost anywhere that any one else can, and he is so fierce that nearly all of the Little Meadow people are terribly afraid of him. Reddy smiled. It was a mean, wicked, crafty smile. Then he hopped up and hurried to find Shadow the Weasel and tell him his plan.

Shadow listened, and then he too began to smile. “It’s easy, Reddy Fox, the easiest thing in the world! We’ll get Peter Rabbit just as sure as fat hens are good eating,” said he, as they started for the old brier patch.

Reddy's plan was very simple. Shadow the Weasel was to follow Peter Rabbit along Peter's narrow little paths and drive Peter out of the old brier patch on to the Green Meadows, where Reddy Fox could surely catch him.

So Reddy Fox sat down to wait while Shadow started into the old brier patch. Peter Rabbit heard him coming and, of course, Peter began to run. Now, when Peter first made his home in the old brier patch, he had foreseen that some day Shadow the Weasel might come to hunt him there, so Peter had made dozens and dozens of little paths, twisting and turning and crossing and recrossing in the most puzzling way. Of course, Peter himself knew every twist and turn of every one of them, but Shadow had not gone very far before he was all mixed up.

Peter led him farther and farther into the middle of the old brier patch. Right there Shadow came to a great big puddle of water. Peter had jumped clear across it, for you know Peter's legs are long and meant for jumping. Now, Shadow hates to get his feet wet, and when he reached the puddle, he stopped. He glared with fierce little red eyes across at Peter Rabbit, sitting on the other side. Then he started around the edge.

Peter waited until Shadow was almost around, and then he jumped back across the puddle. There was nothing for Shadow to do but go back around, which he did. Of course, Peter just did the same thing over again, all the time laughing in his sleeve. Finally he grew so angry that he tried to jump the puddle himself, and in he fell with a great splash!

When Shadow crawled out, wet and muddy, Peter had disappeared, and Shadow couldn't tell which path he had taken. Worse still, he didn't know which path to take to get out himself. He tried one after another, but after a little while he would find himself back at the puddle in the middle of the old brier patch. Shadow the Weasel was lost! Yes, Sir, Shadow the Weasel was lost in the old brier patch.

Outside, Reddy Fox waited and watched, but no frightened Peter Rabbit came jumping out as he expected. What could it mean? After a long, long time he saw some one very muddy and very wet and very tired crawl out of one of Peter Rabbit's little paths. It was Shadow the Weasel. Reddy took one good look at him and then he hurried away. He didn't want to hear what Shadow the Weasel would say. And as he hurried across the Green Meadows, he heard Peter Rabbit's voice from the middle of the old brier patch.

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!" shouted Peter Rabbit.

Reddy Fox ground his teeth.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, chapter 11)*

## STORY 126. July 4, 1912.

### The Plot of Two Rogues.

Reddy Fox studied and studied how he could catch Peter Rabbit. Sammy Jay, happening along, found Reddy Fox sitting on his door-step with his chin in both hands

and looking as dejected as if he hadn't a friend in the world.

"What are you doing?" asked Sammy Jay.

"I'm just a-studying," replied Reddy Fox.

"What are you studying? Perhaps I can help you," said Sammy Jay.

Reddy Fox heaved a long sigh. "I'm a-studying how I can catch Peter Rabbit," replied Reddy.

Sammy Jay scratched his head thoughtfully. Reddy Fox still sat with his chin in his hands and thought and thought and thought. Sammy Jay sat on one foot and scratched and scratched and scratched his head with the other. Suddenly Sammy looked up.

"I have it!" said he. "You remember the hollow log over beyond the old hickory tree?"

Reddy nodded his head.

"Well, I'll go down and invite Peter Rabbit to come over there and see the strangest thing in the world. You know what great curiosity Peter Rabbit has. Now, you be hiding in the hollow log, and when you hear me say to Peter Rabbit, 'the strangest thing in the world is waiting for you over there, Peter,' you spring out, and you'll have Peter."

Reddy Fox brightened up. This plan certainly did look good to Reddy. Peter had fooled him so many times that he was almost in despair. He knew that if he sent another invitation to Peter, Peter would suspect right away that it meant mischief. But Peter wouldn't think that Sammy Jay was planning mischief, because he knew that Sammy is the greatest news teller in the Green Forest.

So Reddy Fox trotted off to the hollow log down by the big hickory tree and crept inside. Sammy Jay flew over to the Old Briar-patch to look for Peter Rabbit. He found him sitting under a big bramble bush.

"Good morning, Peter Rabbit," said Sammy Jay, with his finest manner.

Peter looked at Sammy sharply as he returned his greeting. Sammy Jay wasn't in the habit of being so polite to Peter, and Peter began to study just what it could mean.

"I saw the strangest thing in the world this morning," said Sammy Jay.

Peter pricked up his ears. In spite of himself, he began to grow curious. "What was it, Sammy Jay?" he asked.

Sammy looked very mysterious. "I really don't know what it is," he replied, "but I can show it to you, if you want to see for yourself, Peter Rabbit."

Of course, Peter wanted to see it, so he started out across the Green Meadows with Sammy Jay. Now the farther he went, the more time he had to think, and by the time he had nearly reached the old hickory tree, Peter began to suspect a trick.

Sammy Jay motioned Peter to approach very carefully. "It's right over there, in

that hollow log, Peter,” he whispered. “You go peep in, and you’ll see it.” Then Sammy prepared to give the signal to Reddy Fox.

Peter hopped a couple of steps nearer, and then he sat up very straight and gazed at the hollow log. Somehow, he didn’t just like the looks of it. He didn’t know why, but he just didn’t. Then along came one of Old Mother West Wind’s Merry Little Breezes, dancing right past the hollow log and up to Peter Rabbit, and with him he brought a funny smell. Peter’s little black nose<sup>26</sup> wrinkled. That funny smell certainly reminded Peter of Reddy Fox. He wrinkled his nose again. Then he suddenly whirled about. “Excuse me, Sammy Jay,” he exclaimed. “I just remember something very important!” And before Sammy Jay could open his mouth, Peter had started like a little brown streak for the Old Briar-patch.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 12, “The Plot of Two Scamps”*

## STORY 127. July 5, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Hears Reddy Fox is Dead.

Reddy Fox lay on the side hill. Bobby Coon found him there, and when Bobby spoke to him, Reddy made no reply. Bobby went over and looked at him. Reddy’s eyes were closed. Bobby grinned to himself, then he tip-toed a little nearer and shouted “Boo” right in one of Reddy’s little black ears. Still Reddy did not move. Bobby Coon’s face grew sober. He poked Reddy with his foot, but still Reddy did not move. Then he pulled Reddy’s tail, and still Reddy did not move. “It must be that Reddy Fox is dead,” thought Bobby Coon, and he hurried away to tell the news.

There was great excitement on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest when the little people there heard that Reddy Fox was dead. Of course, everyone wanted to see Reddy, and soon there was a procession of little meadow and forest people hurrying across the Green Meadows to the hillside where Reddy Fox lay. Jimmy Skunk, Johnny Chuck, Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter, Unc’ Billy Possum, Danny Meadow Mouse, Spotty the Turtle, Old Mr. Toad, Grandfather Frog, Jerry Muskrat, Sammy Jay, Blacky the Crow, Happy Jack Squirrel, Striped Chipmunk, Jumper the Hare, Prickly Porky, all were there. They formed a big circle around Reddy Fox.

Then they began to talk about Reddy. Some told of the good things that Reddy had done and what a fine gentleman he was. Others told of the mean things that Reddy Fox had done and how glad they were that they would no longer have to watch out for him. It was surprising the number of bad things that were said. But then, they felt safe in saying them, for was not Reddy lying right there before them, stone dead?

Now, Peter Rabbit had not heard the news until late in the day, and when he did hear it, he started as fast as his long legs could take him to have a last look at Reddy. Half way there he suddenly stopped and scratched one of his long ears. Peter was thinking. It was mighty funny that Reddy Fox should have died without any one having heard that he was sick. Peter started on again, but this time he did not hurry. Presently

<sup>26</sup> This is an error. Cottontails do not have black noses. This was revised to “wobbly” for the book.

he cut a long twig, which he carried along with him.

When he reached the circle around Reddy Fox, he stole up behind Prickly Porky the Porcupine and whispered in his ear. Prickly Porky took the long twig which Peter handed to him, while Peter went off at a little distance and climbed up on an old stump where he could see. Prickly Porky reached over and tickled one of Reddy's black ears. For a minute nothing happened. Then the black ear twitched. Prickly Porky tickled the end of Reddy's little black nose; then he tickled it again. What do you think happened? Why, Reddy Fox sneezed!

My, my, my! How that circle around Reddy Fox did disappear! All the little people who were afraid of Reddy Fox scampered away as fast as they could run, while all the other little people who were not afraid of Reddy Fox began to laugh, and the one who laughed loudest of all was Peter Rabbit, as he started back to the old brier patch.

Of course, Reddy Fox knew then that it was of no use at all to pretend that he was dead, so he sprang to his feet and started after Peter Rabbit at the top of his speed, but when he reached the old brier patch, Peter was safely inside, and Reddy could hear him laughing as if he would split his sides.

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!" shouted Peter Rabbit.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 13, "Reddy Fox Comes to Life")*

## STORY 128. July 6, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit in a Tight Place.

"Hop along, skip along,  
The sun is shining bright;  
Hum a song, sing a song,  
My heart is always light."

It is true, Peter Rabbit always is light-hearted. For days and days Reddy Fox had been trying to catch Peter, and Peter had had to keep his wits very sharp indeed in order to keep out of Reddy's way. Still, it didn't seem to worry Peter much. Just now he was hopping and skipping down the Lone Little Path without a care in the world.

Presently Peter found a nice, shady spot close by a big rock. Underneath one edge of the rock was a place just big enough for Peter to crawl in—it was just the place for a nap. Peter was beginning to feel sleepy, so he crawled in there and soon was fast asleep.

By and by Peter began to dream. He dreamed that he had gone for a long walk, way, way off from the safe old briar patch, and that out from behind a big bush had sprung Reddy Fox. Just as Reddy's teeth were about to close on Peter, Peter woke up. It was such a relief to find that he was really snug and safe under the big rock that he almost shouted aloud. But he didn't, and a minute later he was, oh, so glad he hadn't, for he heard a voice that seemed as if it was right in his ear. It was the voice of Reddy Fox. Yes, sir, it was the voice of Reddy Fox.

Peter hardly dared to breathe, and you may be sure that he did not make even the smallest sound, for Reddy Fox was sitting on the very rock under which Peter was resting. Reddy Fox was talking to Blacky the Crow. Peter listened with all his might, for what do you think Reddy Fox was saying? Why, he was telling Blacky the Crow of a new plan to catch Peter Rabbit and was asking Blacky to help him.

Peter had never been so frightened in his life, for here was Reddy Fox so close to him that Peter could have reached out and touched one of Reddy's legs, as he kicked his heels<sup>27</sup> over the edge of the big rock. By and by Blacky the Crow spoke.

"I saw Peter Rabbit coming down this way early this morning," said Blacky, "and I don't think he has gone home. Why don't you go over and hide near the Old Briar-patch and catch Peter when he comes back? I will watch out, and if I see Peter, I will tell him that you have gone hunting your breakfast way over beyond the big hill. Then he will not be on the watch."

"The very thing," exclaimed Reddy Fox, "and if I catch him, I will surely do something for you, Blacky. I believe that I will go right away."

Then the two rascals planned, and chuckled as they thought how they would outwit Peter Rabbit.

"I'm getting hungry," said Reddy Fox, as he arose and stretched. "I wonder if there is a field mouse hiding under this old rock. I believe I'll look and see."

Peter's heart almost stood still as he heard Reddy Fox slide down off the big rock. He wriggled himself still further under the rock and held his breath. Just then Blacky the Crow gave a sharp "Caw, caw, caw!" That meant that Blacky saw something, and almost at once Peter heard a sound that sometimes filled his heart with fear but which now filled it with great joy. It was the voice of Bowser the Hound. Reddy Fox heard it, too, and he didn't stop to look under the big rock.

A little later Peter very cautiously crawled out of his resting place and climbed up where he could look over the Green Meadows. Way over on the far side he could see Reddy Fox running at the top of his speed, and behind him was Bowser the Hound.

"My! but that was a tight place," said Peter Rabbit, as he stretched himself.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, chapter 14)*

## STORY 129. July 8, 1912.

### Johnny Chuck has Some Fun.

Johnny Chuck had watched Reddy Fox try to fool and catch Peter Rabbit, and sometimes Johnny had been very much afraid that Reddy would succeed. But Peter had been too smart for Reddy every time, and Johnny had laughed with the other little people of the Green Meadows whenever the Merry Little Breezes had brought a new story of how Peter had outwitted Reddy.

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<sup>27</sup> Anthropomorphism.

Illustrations. July 1 to July 6, 1912.



123. Reddy Fox Gets a Scare



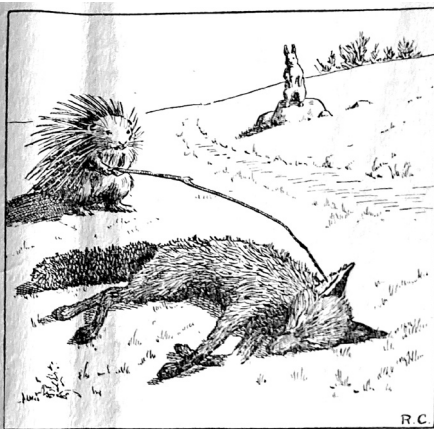
124. Peter Rabbit has a Great Laugh



125. Shadow the Weasel gets Lost



126. The Plot of Two Rogues



127. Peter Rabbit Hears Reddy Fox is Dead



128. Peter Rabbit in a Tight Place



“Peter’ll have to watch out sharper than ever now, for Granny Fox is almost well, and she is very angry because Reddy could not catch Peter Rabbit for her when she was ill. She says that she is going to show that stupid Reddy how to do it and do it quickly,” said Jimmy Skunk, when he stopped to chat with Johnny Chuck one fine morning.

Johnny had just been laughing very hard over one of Peter Rabbit’s tricks, but now his face grew very sober, very sober indeed. “It won’t do to let old Granny Fox catch Peter. It won’t do at all. We must all turn in and help Peter,” said Johnny. “Why, what would the Green Meadows and the Green Forest be like with no Peter Rabbit there?” he added.

Late that afternoon Johnny Chuck happened to find Peter Rabbit taking a nap. Yes, Sir, Peter had actually gone to sleep outside the dear old brier patch. At first Johnny thought that he would waken him and tell him that Reddy Fox was hunting right near. But just then Johnny’s bright eyes saw something that made him chuckle. It was the home of some hot-tempered friends of his, a beautiful home, made of what looked like gray paper. It was fastened to a bush just above a little path leading to the very spot where Peter lay fast asleep. Johnny chuckled again, then off he hurried. He sat down on top of a little hill. Pretty soon Reddy Fox came along through the hollow below.

“Hello, Reddy Fox! Do you want to know how you can catch Peter Rabbit?” asked Johnny.

Reddy looked up. He didn’t know just what to say. He knew that Johnny Chuck and Peter had always been the very best of friends. Still, friends fall out sometimes, and perhaps Johnny and Peter had. Reddy decided that he would be polite.

“I certainly do, Johnny Chuck,” he replied. “Can you tell me how to do it?”

“Yes,” said Johnny. “Peter is fast asleep over yonder behind that little bunch of huckleberry bushes. There is a little path through them. All you have to do is to hurry up that little path as fast and as still as you can.”

Reddy Fox waited to hear no more. His eyes glistened as he started off at the top of his speed up the little path. Just as Johnny had expected, Reddy went in such a hurry that he didn’t use his eyes for anything but signs of Peter Rabbit.

Bang! Reddy had run head first into the paper house of Johnny Chuck’s hot-tempered friends. In fact, he had smashed the whole side in. Out poured old Mrs. Hornet<sup>28</sup> and all her family, and they had their little needles with them. Reddy forgot all about Peter Rabbit. He yelled at the top of his lungs and started for home, slapping at old Mrs. Hornet, whom he never could hit, and stopping every few minutes to roll over and over.

Of course, when he yelled, Peter Rabbit awoke and sat up to see what all the fuss was about. He saw Reddy running as if his life depended upon it. Over on the little hill he saw Johnny Chuck laughing so that the tears ran down his face. Then Peter began to laugh, too, and ran over to ask Johnny Chuck to tell him all about it.

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*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, chapter 15 (“Johnny Chuck Helps Peter”))*

28 A correction to previous bee/yellow jacket mislabeling.

## STORY 130. July 9, 1912.

### Reddy Fox has a Swelled Head.

Reddy Fox was a sight! There was no doubt about that. When he started down on to the Green Meadows that morning he limped like an old, old man. His face was bound in a big handkerchief<sup>29</sup>. Yes indeed, Reddy was a sorry looking sight. His head was swelled so that one eye was closed, and he could hardly see out of the other. Reddy never would have ventured out but that he just had to have some fresh mud from the Smiling Pool.

Reddy had waited until most of the little meadow people were out of the way. Then he had tried to hurry so as to get back again as quickly as possible. But Johnny Chuck's sharp eyes had spied Reddy, and Johnny had guessed right away what the trouble was. He hurried over to tell Peter Rabbit. Then the two little scalawags hunted up Jimmy Skunk and Happy Jack Squirrel<sup>30</sup> to tell them, and the four hid near the Lone Little Path to wait for Reddy to return.

Pretty soon Reddy came limping along. Even Johnny Chuck was surprised at the way Reddy's face had swelled. It was plastered all over with mud, and he was a sorry sight indeed.

Jimmy Skunk appeared very much astonished to see Reddy in such condition, though of course Johnny Chuck had told him all about how Reddy had run head first into the home of old Mrs. Hornet and her family the day before. Jimmy stepped out in the Lone Little Path. "Why, Reddy Fox, what has happened to you?" he exclaimed.

Reddy didn't see the others hiding in the long grass. He didn't want Jimmy Skunk to know that he had been so careless as to run his head into a hornets' nest, so he told a wrong story. He put on a long face. That is, it was as long as he could make it, considering that it was so swelled.

"I've had a most terrible accident, Jimmy Skunk," said Reddy, sighing pitifully. "It happened yesterday as I was returning from an errand over beyond the hill. Just as I was coming through the deepest part of the wood I heard someone crying. Of course, I stopped to find out what the matter was."

"Of course!" interrupted Jimmy Skunk. "Certainly! To be sure! Of course!"

Reddy looked at him suspiciously, but went on with his tale. "Right down in the thickest, blackest place I found one of Unc' Billy Possum's children being worried to death by Digger the Badger. I couldn't see that little Possum hurt."

"Of course not!" broke in Jimmy Skunk.

"So I jumped in and tackled old man Badger, and I had him almost whipped, when I slipped over the edge of a big rock on the side of the hill. It took the skin off my

<sup>29</sup> Anthropomorphism. Removed in book.

<sup>30</sup> All references in this story to "Happy Jack Squirrel" were replaced with "Bobby Coon," and dialogue originally connected to Jimmy Skunk was attributed to Bobby Coon in *The Adventures of Peter Cottontail*.

face and bruised me something terrible. But I don't care, so long as I saved that little Possum child," concluded Reddy, as he started on.

Johnny Chuck stole up behind him and thrust a sharp brier into the seat of Reddy's pants. At the same time Johnny made a noise like a whole family of hornets. Reddy Fox forgot his limp. He never even turned his head to look behind. Instead, he started off at his best speed, and it wasn't until he heard a roar of laughter behind him that he realized that he had been fooled again.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 16, "Reddy Fox Tells a Wrong Story")*

## STORY 131. July 10, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Almost Gets Peter Rabbit.

Reddy Fox really was almost ill from the effects of the stings which old Mrs. Hornet and her family had given him when he knocked in the side of their house. For several days he limped around, his head badly swollen. Yes, Sir, Reddy Fox was in a dreadful bad way. The worst of it was that none of the other little meadow and forest people seemed to be the least bit sorry for him. Some of them actually laughed at him. Peter Rabbit was one of these. You know, Reddy Fox had made life very uncomfortable for Peter for a long time, and now Peter was actually enjoying Reddy's discomfort.

Now, while he was laid up this way, Reddy had plenty of time to think. He noticed that when he went out to walk, all those who, when he was well, kept at a safe distance now hardly got out of his way. They knew that he felt too sore and mean to try to catch them. Peter Rabbit hardly turned out of his path. A bright idea came to Reddy. He would continue to appear to feel badly, even after he was well. He would keep his head bound up and would limp down to the Smiling Pool for some mud every day. He would limp just as he was doing now. Then, when Peter Rabbit came near enough, Reddy would catch him.

So day after day Reddy limped down to the Smiling Pool. He kept his head tied up as if it was as bad as ever, and as he walked, he groaned as if in great pain. Even some of those who hated him most began to feel a little bit sorry for Reddy Fox. Peter Rabbit has a very soft heart, and although he knew that Reddy Fox would like nothing better than to gobble Peter up, he began to feel really sorry for Reddy.

One morning Peter sat just outside the old briar patch, when Reddy came limping along. He looked more miserable than usual. Just as it had been for several days, one of Reddy's eyes was closed.

"It must be hard work to see with only one eye," said Peter Rabbit.

"It is," replied Reddy, with a great sigh. "It is very hard work, indeed."

"I don't see how you manage to get enough to eat," continued Peter, in his most sympathetic voice.

Reddy sighed again. “I don’t, Peter Rabbit. I don’t get enough to eat, and I’m nearly starved this very minute.”

When he said this such a note of longing crept into his voice that Peter instantly grew suspicious. While he was sorry for Reddy, he had no desire to make Reddy feel better by furnishing himself for a meal. Peter hopped around to the blind side of Reddy and turned his back to him, as he inquired for the health of old Granny Fox.

Now, you know that Peter’s eyes are so placed in his head that he can see behind him without turning his head. Reddy Fox did not know this, or he had forgotten it if he did know it. Very slowly and craftily the closed eye opened a wee bit, and in that line of yellow was a hungry look. Peter Rabbit saw it and with a great jump landed behind a friendly bramble bush in the old brier patch.

“Ha! ha!” shouted Peter, “I’d rather talk with you, Reddy Fox, when you haven’t got a closed eye with such a hungry look in it. Ta, ta!”

Reddy Fox just shook his fist at Peter Rabbit, and started off home, pulling the bandage<sup>31</sup> from his head as he went.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, chapter 17)*

## Story 132. July 11, 1912.

### A Great Fear on the Green Meadows

It had been a bad day on the Green Meadows. Yes, sir; it had been a very bad day, especially for the littlest folks who live there. From the time jolly, round, red Mr. Sun first began his long climb up the blue, blue sky until it was almost time for him to go to bed behind the Purple Hills there had been great fear on the Green Meadows. And it was all because of a black spot way, way up in the sky, a black spot that kept going round and round and round and round in circles.

Danny Meadow Mouse poked his head out of his doorway and nearly twisted his head off as he watched the black spot go round and round. He shivered and ducked back into his house, only to stick his head out a few minutes later and do it all over again.

Peter Rabbit stuck to the old brier patch all that day. He was perfectly safe there, but there wasn’t any sweet clover there, and he didn’t dare go out on the Green Meadows to get any. By noon Peter’s neck seemed ready to break from being twisted so much to watch that black spot in the sky. And it was strangely still on the Green Meadows. The little birds forgot to sing. Mrs. Redwing kept close hidden in the bulrushes on the edge of the Smiling Pool. Even Sammy Jay kept to the Green Forest. Only Blacky the Crow ventured out on the Meadows, but Blacky is so big that he is not afraid of much of anything, and though once in a while he rolled an eye up at the black spot high in the sky he went about his business as usual.

Jimmy Skunk, who fears nothing and nobody, stopped to visit with Johnny Chuck.

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31 Anthropomorphism. Not changed in book.

Johnny was sticking very close to his doorway that morning and every minute or two he rolled one eye up to see where the black spot was.

“I don’t know what to make of it,” said Johnny Chuck. “It isn’t Old Whitetail the Marsh Hawk, for he always flies close to the tops of the meadow grass. It isn’t fierce Mr. Goshawk, for he spends most of his time in the Green Forest. It isn’t Old Baldhead the Eagle, for he never stays so long in one place. It isn’t sharp eyed Old Roughleg, for he sits most of the time on the top of a dead tree<sup>32</sup>. And besides, none of them can fly round and round and round without flopping their wings like that fellow does. I wish he would go away.”

But he didn’t go away, but just kept sailing round and round over the Green Meadows and sometimes over the Green Forest. Everyone was sure that it was a hawk, and you know that most of the little meadow and forest folks are terribly afraid of hawks. But no one could remember ever having seen such a wonderful flier among the hawks. This big fellow just sailed and sailed and sailed. Sometimes he shot down almost to the ground and then all the little meadow people scuttled out of sight. None was brave enough to stay and discover who the stranger was.

Now Unc’ Billy Possum had been asleep all day, and so he hadn’t heard of the fright on the Green Meadows. It was just about the time that jolly, round, red Mr. Sun goes to bed that Unc’ Billy came crawling out of his snug home in the hollow tree. Jimmy Skunk happened along just then. He had just seen the stranger glide down and settle for the night on a dead tree in the Green Forest and he told Unc’ Billy Possum all about it. Unc’ Billy pricked up his ears as he listened. Then he grew very much excited and threw up his cap<sup>33</sup>.

“Ah reckon that that is mah ol’ friend, Ol’ Mistah Buzzard!” shouted Unc’ Billy as he started for the dead tree in the Green Forest.

*(The Adventures of Ol’ Mistah Buzzard, Chapter 1)*

## STORY 133. July 12, 1912.

### Unc’ Billy Possum Meets an Old Friend

Unc’ Billy Possum lost no time in getting over to the dead tree in the Green Forest, where Jimmy Skunk had seen the stranger go to roost for the night. Unc’ Billy wanted to get there before the stranger had gone to sleep, for if it really was his old friend Ol’ Mistah Buzzard, as Unc’ Billy felt sure it was, he had just got to say “howdy” that very night.

Now Unc’ Billy is seldom caught napping, so though he was very sure that this was his old friend he didn’t intend to run any risk of furnishing a good supper for

32 The book version, reflecting seasonal accuracy adds “has gone back to his home in the Far North.”

33 Anthropomorphism. Removed in book version.

a hungry hawk. So, as Unc' Billy drew near the dead tree he crept up very still and carefully until he was where he could see the stranger clearly. There he sat on a branch of the dead tree. He was dressed in sooty black, and he sat like an old man, his head drawn down and his shoulders hunched up. His head was bald and wrinkled.

Unc' Billy took one good look and then he let out a whoop that made the stranger stretch out his long neck and begin to grin in pleased surprise.

"Hello, O' Mistah Buzzard! Where'd yo'all come from?" shouted Unc' Billy Possum.

"Ah reckon Ah done come straight from the sunny souf, and Ah reckon this is the lonest land Ah ever done seen. Ah'm going straight back where Ah come from. What yo'all staying up here fo' anyway, Unc' Billy?"

Unc' Billy grinned. "Ah'm staying because Ah done like here mighty well, and Ah reckon that yo'all is going to like mighty well, too," replied Unc' Billy.

Mr. Buzzard shook his head. "All day Ah done try to make friends, and every one done run away. Ah don't understand it, Unc' Billy. Ah cert'nly don't understand it at all." Mr. Buzzard shook his head sorrowfully.

Unc' Billy's wits are sharp, and he had guessed right away what the trouble was. So he explained to Mistah Buzzard how he had been mistaken for a fierce hawk, and that the reason the Green Meadows had been so lonely was because all the little meadow people had been hiding and shivering with fear as they had watched O' Mistah Buzzard sailing round in the sky.

Pretty soon Ol' Mistah Buzzard began to see the joke. There he had been sailing round and round in the sky and growing lonest for someone to talk to, and there down below him had been the very ones he wanted to make friends with, every one of them frightened most to death because they mistook him for a hawk. Mistah Buzzard began to chuckle and then he began to laugh. "Ah reckon Ah'll have to stay a day or two just to see if yo'all is right," said he.

"Ah reckon yo'all will," replied Unc' Billy Possum.

And Ol' Mistah Buzzard did.

*(The Adventures of Ol' Mistah Buzzard, Chapter 2, "Unc' Billy Meets an Old Friend")*

## STORY 134. July 13, 1912.

### Ol' Mistah Buzzard makes Friends.

Unc' Billy Possum and Jimmy Skunk tramped through the Green Forest and over the Green Meadows till their feet ached. They had started out to visit the homes of all the little people who live there to tell them that the black stranger who had sailed the skies all the day before, and frightened most of them so that they hardly dared put their noses outside of their own doors, was as harmless as Peter Rabbit himself. You see,

they had all taken him for a fierce hawk, and had been frightened almost to death at the very sight of him. And all the time he wasn't a hawk at all, but just an old friend of Unc' Billy Possum, Ol' Mistah Buzzard, who had come up from way down who had come south.

"My!" exclaimed Unc' Billy, as he stopped to mop his face with a red cotton handkerchief<sup>34</sup>, "Ah didn't know there were so many little people on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest."

Just then he spied the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind, and a happy thought came to him. He would get them to take his message around. Why hadn't he thought of it before? Of course, the Merry Little Breezes were tickled to death, for they are always looking for something to do for others. So off they raced as fast as they could, while Unc' Billy hurried back to have a chat with Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

At first many of the little meadow people were inclined to be very doubtful of the harmlessness of Mistah Buzzard. "How do you know?" demanded Danny Meadow Mouse of the Merry Little Breezes.

"Because Unc' Billy Possum has known him for a long time and he says so," replied the Merry Little Breezes.

"I'll believe it when I see Unc' Billy risking his precious old skin where the stranger can reach him," said Danny, stretching his neck to try to see over the grass tops.

The Merry Little Breezes clapped hands joyously. "Look right down there by Farmer Brown's old hayrick."

Danny came out where he could see. Sure enough there was Ol' Mistah Buzzard, large as life, sitting on the hayrick, and right down below him was sitting Unc' Billy Possum and the two were talking and laughing fit to kill themselves. More than that, old Mrs. Possum was hurrying up with a broad grin and behind her scampered all the little Possum children. When Danny saw that he made up his mind that Ol' Mistah Buzzard really was harmless, and promptly started down to pay his respects.

One by one all day long the little meadow and forest people stole over to pay their respects to Ol' Mistah Buzzard. They found him all ready to make friends and so full of stories that most of them stayed to listen.

Late that afternoon when Ol' Mistah Buzzard sought the dead tree in the Green Forest to roost for the night, Unc' Billy Possum strolled by that way to see if his old friend was comfortable. Ol' Mistah Buzzard looked down at Unc' Billy and his eyes twinkled.

"Ah reckon," said Ol' Mistah Buzzard, "that yo' All is right, and Ah sho'ly am going to stay on the Green Meadows a right smart while. Ah sho'ly am."

*(The Adventures of Ol' Mistah Buzzard, Chapter 3)*

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34 Anthropomorphism. Removed in book version.

Illustrations. July 8 to July 13, 1912.



129. Johnny Chuck has Some Fun



130. Reddy Fox Has a Swelled Head



131. Reddy Fox Almost Gets Peter Rabbit



132. A Great Fear on the Green Meadows



133. Unc' Billy Possum Meets an Old Friend



134. Ol' Mistah Buzzard Makes Friends



## STORY 135. July 15, 1912.

### Ol' Mistah Buzzard Tells a Story

All the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest, had learned that the big black bird which they had watched sailing and sailing high in the blue, blue sky was not a hawk at all, but Ol' Mistah Buzzard, a friend of Unc' Billy Possum, who had come up from 'way down south. And when they learned this there was great rejoicing, for Unc' Billy Possum had said that Ol' Mistah Buzzard never harms anyone.

So all the little meadow and forest people hurried over to the tall dead tree in the Green Forest where Ol' Mistah Buzzard delighted to sit, and all were very polite to him, especially the little ones, who had been most frightened when they mistook him for a hawk sailing in the blue, blue sky.

Unc' Billy Possum introduced each one as he arrived, and each hastened to tell Ol' Mistah Buzzard how glad they all were to welcome him to the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. Ol' Mistah Buzzard was just as polite as they were, and bowed his wrinkled, bald head to this one and to that one in a very grand way. As usual, Peter Rabbit was brimming over with curiosity, and he could hardly wait to be introduced before he began to ask questions.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Buzzard, but will you tell us if you are very, very old?" asked Peter.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard gave Peter a funny sidelong glance as he replied:

"Ah reckon Ah'm right smart old, Brer Rabbit<sup>35</sup>: Ah reckon Ah'm right smart old, and yet Ah might, be older; yes, sah, Ah sho'ly might be older. Why do yo' ask, Brer Rabbit?"

Peter looked a little bit foolish and hesitated a minute before he replied in a very low voice:

"Because I thought only very, very old people ever have bald heads."

Ol' Mistah Buzzard threw back his head and laughed and laughed, fit to kill himself., "Ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed Ol' Mistah Buzzard; and because it seemed to tickle him so everybody else began to laugh, too. Even Peter laughed, although he felt very uncomfortable, for it seemed as if they were laughing at him.

"Ah reckon. Brer Rabbit, yo' all doan know much about mah family. Ah reckon yo' all done live so long up no'th yo' done got to thinking that, no one who lives anywhere else is of much account—just po' trash.<sup>36</sup> Isn't that so, Brer Rabbit?" asked Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

Peter looked more confused than ever, but he hastened to tell Or Mistah Buzzard that he didn't really think this at all and that he had the greatest respect, the very greatest respect, for Ol' Mistah Buzzard and all his family. Then, his curiosity getting

35 A direct Uncle Remus reference.

36 Omitted in chapter.

the better of him, he added:

“But I would like to know, why you happen to be bald-headed, Mistah Buzzard.”

Ol’ Mistah Buzzard grinned good naturedly and settled himself more comfortably on the branch of the dead tree.

“It’s quite a story, Brer Rabbit. It’s quite a story,” said he.

“Do tell it to us!” exclaimed Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck and Happy Jack Squirrel together.

Ol’ Mistah Buzzard looked all around the circle of little meadow and forest people.

“Ah doan, want to tire yo’ alls. Ah sho’ly doan want to tire yo’ alls and make a nuisance of mahself when we alls are just getting so nicely acquainted,” said he.

“You won’t! You won’t! Please tell us how you happen to be baldheaded!” shouted all together.

Ol’ Mistah Buzzard scratched his bald head gently and then, while all the little meadow and forest people gathered around, he told the story of how he happens to have a bald head.

(Significantly revised for *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*, Chapter 3 “Mistah Buzzard’s Bald Head, part 1”)

## STORY 136. July 16, 1912.

### Why Ol’ Mistah Buzzard Has a Bald Head

Ol’ Mistah Buzzard sat on a tall dead tree in the Green Forest and looked down at the circle of new friends, the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest, who were eagerly waiting to hear how it happens that he has a bald head. He scratched his head and cleared his throat and then he began.

“Once upon a time, long, long ago, when the world was young,” said Ol’ Mistah Buzzard, “mah great grand-father a thousand times removed had feathers on his head, just like ol’ King Eagle and ol’ Mistah Hawk and ol’ Mistah Falcon, and all the other birds.

“Now, Grandfather Buzzard was very proud of his big broad wings, and used to spend most of his time sailing around in the sky and minding his own business.

Ol’ King Eagle was very fierce and very strong, just as Mr. Eagle, whom you all know, is today; and he was jealous, was ol’ King Eagle, as he watched Grandfather Buzzard sailing around in the sky. Yo’ see, ol’ King Eagle didn’t want the other birds to admire anyone but himself. One day he overheard little Mistah Sparrer say that he wished he could fly like Grandfather Buzzard. Ol’ King Eagle flared up right away. Yes, sah, he flared up, for he was quick tempered, was ol’ King Eagle.

“ ‘Pooh! said he. That no ‘count Buzzard can’t fly.’

“Little Mistah Sparrer was sitting snug and safe in the middle of a thorn tree, and he was sassy, was little Mistah Sparrer. Yes, sah, he cert’nly was sassy, for he shouts out:

“He can beat yo’ flying any day, even if yo’ are the king.”

“A lot of the other birds heard him and ol’ King Eagle knew that he just had to make sassy little Mistah Sparrer swallow his words. So when Grandfather Buzzard came down to earth again, ol’ King Eagle demanded that they have a race to see who could fly the highest. Grandfather Buzzard was willing to oblige ol’ King Eagle, for he didn’t want any trouble.

“Everybody came to see that race, everybody who could fly or walk or creep. Ol’ King Eagle ordered his cousins, ol’ Mistah Hawk and ol’ Mistah Falcon, to go along too, though what for nobody knew till afterward.

“Up they went, ‘round and ‘round in circles till everybody grew dizzy watching them. Round and round, up and up into the blue, blue sky they went until they were just tiny, tiny specks, and then they went clear out of sight of those watching them down on the earth.

“They were gone a long time. Then sharp-eyed, sassy little Mistah Sparrer shouted, ‘Here they come!’

“Sure enough, there were some little specks up in the sky. They grew bigger and bigger, but there were only three. Pretty soon ol’ King Eagle dropped down to earth, and he was clean beat out, was ol’ King Eagle, clean beat out.

“Where’s Mistah Buzzard? shouted everyone.

“I beat him so badly that he was ashamed of himself and flew away,” said ol’ King Eagle, and his cousins, ol’ Mistah Hawk and ol’ Mistah Falcon, said it was so.

“Just when everyone was getting ready to go home Grandfather Buzzard came sailing down, and he didn’t seem the least bit tired. Everybody began to hoot at him, until sassy little Mistah Sparrer shouted:

“What’s the matter with your head, Mistah Buzzard?”

Everybody crowded around to look. Grandfather Buzzard hadn’t got a feather left on his head. No, sah, hadn’t got a single little feather. Yo’ see he’d been so high the sun had scorched them all off. When ol’ King Eagle saw that, he just sneaked off without a word, and his cousins, ol’ Mistah Hawk and ol’ Mistah Falcon, went with him, because everyone knew that they had told lie.

“And ever since then mah family has had bald heads,” concluded ol’ Mistah Buzzard, proudly.<sup>37</sup>

(Significantly edited for *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*, Chapter 3 “Mistah Buzzard’s Bald Head,” part 2)

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37 This story was edited for the book version to increase the extent to which Ol’ Mistah Buzzard spoke in dialect.

STORY 137. July 17, 1912.

## Ol' Mistah Buzzard and Digger the Badger Have a Dispute

“When Ah left mah home ‘way down south Ah cert’nly did hate to leave Mistah Gopher and all the rest of mah friends,” said Ol’ Mistah Buzzard as he sat on his dead tree in the Green Forest.

“Did I hear you speak of Mr. Gopher?” asked Digger the Badger, who had come up just in time to hear the last words.

“Yo’ sho’ly did, Mistah Badger; yo’ sho’ly did. Ah’n very fon’ of Mistah Gopher,” replied Ol’ Mistah Buzzard. “Do yo’ know him?”

“Do I know him! I should say I did!” exclaimed Digger the Badger, who, you know, came out of the great west. “Why, when I was a little fellow, Mr. Gopher and I used to have digging matches; and he surely can dig! But I didn’t know that he had moved down south.”

“Why, what are you talking about, Mistah Badger? He and his family have always lived down south!” exclaimed Ol’ Mistah Buzzard.

Now Digger the Badger is quick tempered. “You lie!” he shouted. “Mr. Gopher and his family have always lived out west.”

To tell anyone that they lie is a dreadful thing. Digger shouldn’t have said that, even if he did believe that Mistah Buzzard was telling an untruth. Mistah Buzzard was so taken aback that for a few minutes he couldn’t find his tongue. When he did he talked very plainly to Digger the Badger. He called him names. The noise of the quarrel brought all the other little meadow and forest people on the run to see what it all meant.

“Ah tell yo’, Mr. Gopher and his family have always lived in the south, and Ah doan believe you knew Mr. Gopher at all!” said Ol’ Mistah Buzzard.

Digger the Badger fairly danced up and down, he was so mad.

“Not know him!” he shrieked. “Not know him! Why, I know every hair on his coat!”

Mistah Buzzard stared at Digger a full minute. “What was that you said?” he asked slowly.

“I said I knew every hair on Mr. Gopher’s coat,” snapped Digger.

Ol’ Mistah Buzzard looked around the circle of little meadow and forest people in triumph.

“Ah knew he didn’t know Mr. Gopher,” said he. “Mistah Gopher’s coat isn’t made of hair at all; it’s of shell.”

It was Digger’s turn to stare. Then he began to laugh. He laughed and laughed.

“Shell,” he gasped. “Shell!” Then he went off into another fit of laughter, while Ol’ Mistah Buzzard grew very red and angry.

“What’s all this fuss about?” demanded Old Mother West Wind, who was on her way home to the Purple Hills.

When she had heard all about it she began to laugh. “You are both right and both wrong,” said she. “Mr. Gopher who lives way down south does wear a shell coat, and he is cousin to Spotty the Turtle, but lives on land and dig holes in the ground. Mr. Gopher whom Digger the Badger knows does wear a coat of hair, and he is a distant relative to Striped Chipmunk. And the two Mr. Gophers are not related at all. Now shake hands<sup>38</sup>.

And Ol’ Mistah Buzzard and Digger the Badger did.

(*The Adventures of Ol’ Mistah Buzzard*, Chapter 4, “A Funny Dispute”)

## STORY 138. July 18, 1912.

### The Lost Baby

Striped Chipmunk met Unc’ Billy Possum coming down the Lone Little Path on to the Green Meadows. Unc’ Billy stopped when he reached Striped Chipmunk, and Striped Chipmunk saw that Unc’ Billy Possum was in trouble. He didn’t grin when Striped Chipmunk said “Good morning, Unc’ Billy.” More than that, there were tears in Unc’ Billy’s eyes. Striped Chipmunk’s soft little heart went out to Unc’ Billy the minute he saw those tears.

“What’s the matter, Unc’ Billy? Do tell me what the matter is,” begged Striped Chipmunk.

“Ah—Ah done lost one of mah babies,” said Unc’ Billy wiping away one of the tears.

“Lost one of your babies!” exclaimed Striped Chipmunk. “Is—is it dead?”

“Ah do’ know. ‘Deed Ah wish Ah did,” replied Unc’ Billy, wiping away another tear.

Striped Chipmunk felt the tears rising in his own eyes and reached for his handkerchief<sup>39</sup>.

Tell me all about it, Unc’ Billy, and perhaps I can help you,” said he.

There isn’t much to tell,” replied Unc’ Billy. “Mah ol’ woman took mah eight li’l’ chil’en out a-hunting for their dinner by light of the moon last night just as she always does, while Ah was up to Farmer Brown’s henhouse a-look-ing for some fresh eggs. When Ah got home to mah holler tree mah ol’ woman was just putting the chil’en to bed. When she got ‘em all tucked in she counted ‘em and—and—mah littlest one wasn’t there.” Unc’ Billy choked as he said this.

38 Anthropomorphism. Removed in revised version.

39 Anthropomorphism.

“She always carries this one in her pocket because he hasn’t been so right pert as the others. But when she looked in her pocket, he wasn’t there. She done lost mah li’l’ baby somewhere in the Green Forest and—and Ah won’t see him no mo’.”

Striped Chipmunk reached up and patted Unc’ Billy Possum on the shoulder. Don’t you worry any more, Unc’ Billy,” he said kindly. “If he’s in the Green Forest we’ll find him. You go along home and tell Mrs. Possum not to worry either, for I’ll get all the little meadow and forest people to help hunt for your baby.”

Just then Striped Chipmunk caught sight of the Merry Little Breezes playing down on the Green Meadows. “Hi, there!” he shouted, jumping up on a stump where they all could see him.

The Merry Little Breezes came dancing over to see what Striped Chipmunk wanted, for they are great playfellows of his. He told them all about Unc’ Billy Possum’s lost baby. They waited just long enough to hear the whole story, then away they raced to spread the news and to hunt for the lost baby.

All this time old Mrs. Possum was almost distracted. She wrung her hands and ran round and round crying. She didn’t dare leave the seven she had put to bed for fear that they would wake up, and, if she wasn’t there, would stray away and get lost, too. She was so upset, was old Mrs. Possum, that she couldn’t even remember where she had been the night before.

The Merry Little Breezes soon spread the news over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest. At once every one hurried up to the hollow tree to offer sympathy and to help search for Unc’ Billy Possum’s lost baby, and the first to arrive was Reddy Fox.

## STORY 139. July 19, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Offers to Help.

When Reddy Fox heard that one of Unc’ Billy Possum’s babies was lost in the Green Forest he at once hurried over to Unc’ Billy’s hollow tree to find out if it was true. He found old Mrs. Possum wringing her hands and crying. Reddy put one hand over his mouth to hide a grin. Then he drew his face down very soberly and in his most sympathetic voice he asked,

“Is it true, Mrs. Possum, that you have lost one of your babies?”

“Yes,” sobbed old Mrs Possum, “Ah done lost mah littlest baby, and Ah won’t never see him no mo’! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!”

“There, there. Mrs. Possum, don’t cry. We’ll find your baby for you,” said Reddy Fox in his smoothest voice, at the same time taking out his handkerchief and pretending to wipe away a tear, but really hiding a smile. “Did you say that it is your littlest one?”

“Yes,” replied old Mrs. Possum, drying her eyes with her apron<sup>40</sup>, “mah littlest,

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40 Anthropomorphism.

preciouslest baby.”

Reddy Fox hid another smile in his handkerchief<sup>41</sup>. “It is the tenderest then. My, but he will make a good meal. I certainly must find him,” he said to himself, but aloud he said: “Don’t you worry any more. Mrs. Possum. You know I have a sharp nose and I almost know I can find his tracks. Then it will be easy for me to follow him and find him for you. Don’t you worry any more. Just leave it all to me.”

Old Mrs. Possum dried her eyes: “Yo’ are so good, Reddy Fox,” said she. “Ah really believe that if any one can find him yo’ can. It is so good of yo’ to offer to help. Oh, ah do hope yo’ will find him.”

If old Mrs. Possum could have seen the gleam in Reddy’s eyes as he replied so heartily. “So do I, Mrs. Possum; so do I,” she would not have been so comforted. But she didn’t, and as Reddy politely bade her good-bye, she thought him a good-hearted neighbor and a very fine gentleman indeed.

As for Reddy Fox, as soon as he was out of sight and hearing of old Mrs. Possum he threw his hat in the air<sup>42</sup> and turned a somersault.

“Now for a good meal of tender young Possum,” said he, as he began to run this way and that with his nose to the ground, searching for the trail of the little lost Possum baby.

Now while Reddy Fox had been talking to old Mrs Possum, Peter Rabbit had come up to offer his sympathy and help. When he saw Reddy Fox, Peter slipped behind a tree and neither Reddy nor Mrs. Possum saw him at all. Peter heard all that Reddy said, and he longed to warn Mrs Possum not to believe a word of it, but he didn’t dare to, for he was too far from the old brier patch to reach it if Reddy should try to catch him.

As soon as Reddy Fox had left, Peter Rabbit hurried to tell old Mrs. Possum how sorry he felt for her and to tell her that he was going to hunt for the lost baby.

“Reddy Fox certainly has got a sharp nose,” said Peter Rabbit to himself as he hurried in the direction Reddy had taken, “and he’s a whole lot more likely to find that lost baby than I am. I guess I’ll just follow Reddy and see what I can do if he does find that poor little Possum.”

## STORY 140. July 20, 1912.

### The Hunt for the Lost Baby

No one ever forgot that great hunt through the Green Forest for Unc’ Billy Possum’s last baby. Everybody took part. Happy Jack Squirrel, Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, Striped Chipmunk, Johnny Chuck, Jimmy Skunk, Danny Meadow Mouse, Bobby Coon, Whitefoot, the Wood Mouse, even old Mr. Toad. Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter came up from the Smiling Pool. Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow, who seldom do anything for anyone but themselves, helped in the great hunt. You see they had all learned to think a great deal of Unc’ Billy Possum.

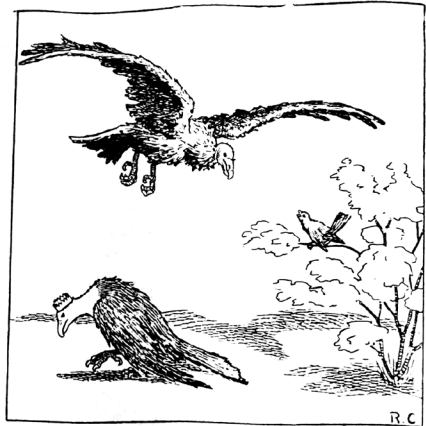
41 Anthropomorphism.

42 Anthropomorphism.

Illustrations. July 15 to July 20, 1912.



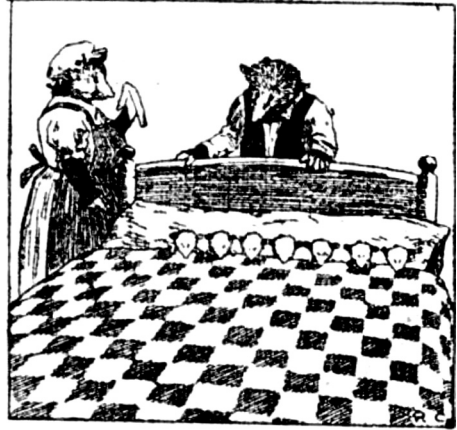
135. Ol' Mistah Buzzard tells a story



136. Why Ol' Mistah Buzzard has a bald head



137. Ol' Mistah Buzzard and Digger the Badger Have a Dispute



138. The Lost Baby



139. Reddy Fox offers to help



140. The hunt for the lost baby



They looked in hollow trees and old logs. They peeked under rocks and behind old stumps. Every place that they could think of where Baby Possum might hide was looked into, but not a trace of the lost baby could they find. Every once in a while one of them would come across Reddy Fox. Reddy always appeared to have no interest at all in the search, but the minute he thought he was alone, down went his sharp little nose to the ground and he ran swiftly this way and that way, hunting for the tracks of the lost baby possum.

For a while Reddy was badly puzzled, for you see he found the tracks made by the seven other Possum children when they had been playing about with their mother. But by and by he found one lone, little track that led away from the others. Reddy gave a little yelp of delight and began to gallop along the trail. And as he ran his mouth watered, for he was thinking of what a good dinner he would find at the end of the trail. The more he thought of it the faster he hurried, for he was dreadfully afraid that someone else would find the lost baby.

Now, all the time Peter Rabbit was following Reddy Fox, though Reddy Fox didn't know it. Peter Rabbit had guessed what was in Reddy's heart and he knew just how keen Reddy's nose is. So Peter made up his mind that Reddy would be the one likely to find Unc' Billy Possum's lost baby, and that when he did—Peter didn't like to think what would happen.

So Peter patiently followed Reddy Fox, dodging from tree to tree, so that Peter would not see him. He heard Reddy yelp when he found the trail, and Peter knew what it meant. This way and that way wound the crooked trail, where the little baby possum had wandered, under fallen trees, into hollow logs, up on old mossy stumps. Patiently but eagerly Reddy Fox followed, and as he ran his mouth watered more and more. He grinned wickedly as he remembered how old Mrs. Possum had said that she hoped he would find her lost baby.

And behind Reddy Fox dodged Peter Rabbit, never once losing sight of Reddy, but keeping out of sight himself. Suddenly Reddy lifted his nose and sniffed. Then he sniffed again. He had reached the end of the trail and he could smell the baby Possum himself.

Peter Rabbit saw Reddy stop and look up in a black birch tree. Peter looked too. What he saw made him nearly give himself away by laughing out loud.

## STORY 141. July 22, 1912.

### What Peter Rabbit Saw.

Peter Rabbit, dodging along behind Reddy Fox, had seen Reddy suddenly stop and sniff, with his sharp little black nose pointed in the direction of a black birch tree. Then Peter Rabbit knew that Reddy Fox had found Unc' Billy Possum's lost baby, and with all his might Peter hoped that Baby Possum was safely out of reach of Reddy Fox. Very carefully Peter Rabbit peeped out from behind a big pine tree, so as to see better. What he did see made him merely laugh out loud.

There sat Reddy Fox at the foot of the black birch tree, looking out at the tip of one of the branches. Reddy's mouth was wide open, and he was laughing so that he had to hold his sides, but it was a laugh without noise. And in the eyes of Reddy Fox was a cruel, hungry look that made Peter Rabbit shiver.

It was when Peter looked out to the tip of the branch at which Reddy Fox was staring so longingly that Peter began to laugh, too. It was a funny sight. Yes, sir, it was one of the funniest sights Peter Rabbit had ever seen. There, sure enough, was Unc' Billy Possum's lost baby! But what under the sun was he doing? At first Peter Rabbit couldn't understand it at all. [Baby Possum]<sup>43</sup> was hanging from the branch by his funny little tail, and he was clawing and reaching for something, and because he couldn't get it, he was growing madder and madder every minute.

Pretty soon Baby Possum climbed back on to the branch, ran along it to the trunk of the tree, and then out on a branch just below the one from which he had been hanging. Out, out he climbed until the branch was so small that Baby Possum began to be afraid. But he hung on with hands, feet and tail, and crept out and out until he didn't dare creep an inch further. Then Peter Rabbit saw what it all meant. There, just out of Baby Possum's reach, was a beautiful little nest, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Flycatcher.

What did Baby Possum want of Mr. and Mrs. Flycatcher's nest? Why, right inside, as Peter Rabbit shrewdly suspected, were four beautiful little white eggs. It was these that Baby Possum was after, for he had been out all night and he was very, very hungry.

Back Baby Possum climbed to the branch above and out this until he was right over the nest. Then he let himself down by his funny, slim little tail until there was only one turn of it around the branch, and he couldn't let himself down another teeny, weeny bit. There he swung right over the eggs, almost but not quite within reach, snapping his funny little jaws in his rage and clawing at the empty air.

Just about then something happened. What do you think it was? Why Mr. and Mrs. Flycatcher came home. Yes, sir, they surely did. They saw Baby Possum before he saw them, and they didn't come up and shake hands politely. Oh my, no! One struck Baby Possum on one side, and one on the other, and each pulled out a mouthful of hair.

Baby Possum yelled. He was so surprised that he almost let go with his tail. Reddy Fox, waiting down below, hoped that he would. But he didn't. Somehow he managed to scramble back to the branch, and along this to the trunk of the tree behind which he tried to hide. But Mr. and Mrs. Flycatcher were too quick for him, and though he struck at them and hissed and snapped his sharp little white teeth, they were not a bit afraid. Baby Possum certainly was having a terrible time.

"Ah never'll do it again! Truly Ah never will," he sobbed, as he crawled into a tiny hollow just big enough for him to hide in.

STORY 142. July 23, 1912.

## The Gentleman in Red.

43      The original mistakenly says "Billy Possum."

Baby Possum had been badly frightened. There was no doubt about that. When Mr. and Mrs. Flycatcher had found him trying to steal their eggs, they certainly had punished him well. Yes, indeed! They had pulled his hair and torn his clothes and pinched him and pecked him until he was only too glad to hide away in a tiny little hollow in the black birch tree.

How long he had lain there snivelling and moaning he didn't know. It seemed to him that he had been there years and years. Of course, it really was only a very little while, but it seemed a long, long time to Baby Possum as he lay there, not daring to put even the tip of his little nose outside. By and by he heard someone calling.

"Baby Possum! Baby Possum!" called a pleasant voice.

Baby Possum stopped crying and listened.

"Baby Possum! Baby Possum! It is safe for you to come out now," said the same pleasant voice.

Baby Possum cautiously poked his sharp little nose out of the hollow in which he was hiding. Mr. and Mrs. Flycatcher were not in sight. Then, Baby Possum poked his whole head out so that he could look down. There, under the tree, sat a gentleman in a very fine red coat and wearing a white waistcoat. He was looking up at Baby Possum and smiling. It must be he who had called.

"Who are you?" asked Baby Possum, very impolitely.

"I am your uncle, and I have come to take you back to your home in the big hollow tree," said the fine-looking gentleman in red and smiled until he showed all his long, white teeth. Baby Possum shivered.

"Ah do' want to go home. Besides, Ah don't like your long, sharp teeth," said Baby Possum.

The gentleman in red closed his mouth with a snap. Baby Possum jumped at the sound. "Ah don't like yo'. Ah don't want to go home," said he.

"Listen!" said the fine gentleman in red in his softest, pleasantest voice. "On my way over here I found—what do you think?"

Baby Possum shook his head. "Ah do' know," said he.

"Some of the nicest, freshest eggs you have ever seen. My, but they did look good!" replied the fine gentleman in red, smacking his lips.

At the word eggs Baby Possum became interested right away. He came wholly out of his snug, safe little hollow.

"Are—are they where Ah could reach 'em?" he asked eagerly.

"They certainly are," replied the fine gentleman in red "You come right down and I'll take you over there. You can eat all you want and then take some home. My! I would like one of those eggs myself right now. I am afraid that unless you hurry someone else will get them."

Baby Possum's eyes sparkled. He started down the tree in a hurry. As he did so he happened—just happened—to look over to the foot of a big pine tree. What he saw made him stop suddenly. It was a funny little fellow with long ears, and he was shaking his head so hard that his long ears went flippety-flap. Then Baby Possum looked down at the fine gentleman in red who was looking up and smiling till he showed all his long, white teeth. Those teeth made Baby Possum shiver again.

“Ah done lost mah appetite fo' eggs,” said Baby Possum, as he scrambled back to the safe, snug little hollow in the black birch tree.

STORY 143. July 24, 1912.

## Baby Possum Changes his Mind.

Reddy Fox sat at the foot of the black birch tree, in a hollow of which Baby Possum was hiding. Reddy scratched his head and tried to think what could have made Baby Possum suddenly lose its appetite. Reddy had tried to tempt Baby Possum to go with him for some nice, fresh eggs, and Baby Possum actually had started down the tree. Then, like a flash, he had suddenly changed his mind, and had gone back. What Reddy Fox did not know was that Baby Possum had seen a funny little fellow with long ears stick his head out from behind a big pine tree and shake it, and then had decided that it was best not to come down.

“Such a little fellow as Baby Possum hasn't got much sense. He must be getting lonesome by this time, so I'll just try another plan,” thought Reddy Fox. So in his gentlest, softest voice he called:

“Baby Possum! Baby Possum!”

There was no answer, so after a few minutes Reddy Fox tried again. “Baby Possum! Baby Possum! I have a message for you,” he called.

Baby Possum heard and poked his sharp little face out of the safe, snug little hollow in which he was hiding. Right down underneath him was the same fine gentleman in red who had invited him to go for some eggs. As soon as Reddy Fox saw Baby Possum he began to talk in his softest, pleasantest voice.

“Baby Possum,” said he, “your mother sent me to find you and bring you home. She is over in the big hollow tree crying her eyes out for her lost baby, and all your brothers and sisters are crying too.”

“Ah don't care,” said Baby Possum.

Now all the time he did care and he was beginning to wish himself safely back in the dear old hollow tree. Reddy Fox pretended that he did not hear and kept right on talking.

“And your father, dear old Unc' Billy Possum, is so worried that he is almost crazy,” continued Reddy Fox. “He has tramped through the Green Forest looking for you until he is almost too tired to move.”

“Ah don’t care!” said Baby Possum. All the time he did care, and right down in his throat there was a lump that grew and grew as he listened to Reddy Fox.

“If you’ll come down right away, I’ll take you home on my back and give you the finest ride you’ve ever had,” went on Reddy Fox in his pleasant voice. “You can play I’m your horse and we’ll be down in no time.

“Will you take me right straight home?” asked Baby Possum.

“Just as straight as I know how,” replied Reddy Fox.

“And run as fast as the wind?” asked Baby Possum, his eyes beginning to sparkle.

“Just as fast as the wind,” said Reddy, hiding a grin behind a hand<sup>44</sup>.

Baby Possum thought it over. It certainly would be fun to ride home on such a fine horse as this gentleman in red. “Ah’ll come,” said Baby Possum, beginning to climb down the tree. Just then he looked over to the foot of the big pine where once before he had seen the funny little fellow with long ears. There he was again, shaking his head harder than ever.

Billy Possum stopped and looked down. Reddy Fox was smiling up at him and Baby Possum saw all of Reddy’s long white teeth.

“Ah’ve changed mah mind,” said Baby Possum, scrambling back to his safe, snug little hollow.

## STORY 144. July 25, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Tries to Scare Baby Possum

Reddy Fox was losing patience. There was no doubt about it. Reddy Fox was losing patience. Twice Baby Possum had started down from his safe, snug little hollow in the black birch tree and twice he had changed his mind. Reddy didn’t know why. Perhaps if he had happened to peep behind the big pine tree a little way back of him and seen Peter Rabbit hugging himself for joy he would have suspected why.

But Reddy Fox thought himself quite alone. He was growing hungrier and hungrier, and the hungrier he grew the more he thought of how good Baby Possum would taste. And he was growing angry, was Reddy Fox. In fact, the hungrier he grew the angrier he grew. But if wouldn’t do to let Baby Possum know that. No, indeed! So Reddy Fox swallowed his anger as best he could and, after waiting a little while, tried again.

“Baby Possum,” he called in the same gentle voice he has used before. Do you know that you are not safe in that hollow?”

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44 Anthropomorphism.

“What’s that?” cried Baby Possum, thrusting his sharp little nose out of the snug little hollow in the black birch.

“I said that you are not safe in that hollow,” replied Reddy Fox.

“Why not? It looks good to me,” said Baby Possum.

“Because it is one of the hiding places of Shadow the Weasel. You know he is very fond of young possum and would like nothing better than to eat you for his breakfast,” replied Reddy Fox.

Now it wasn’t true about the hollow, for this didn’t belong to anyone. But Baby Possum didn’t know this, and he scrambled out in a hurry.

“Is—is—is he anywhere around?” asked Baby Possum, looking this way and that way in great fright.

“I saw him just a little while ago,” replied Reddy Fox, “and I wouldn’t be surprised if he was to come any minute. This is one of his favorite hiding places.”

Baby Possum shivered with fright. “Oh, dear!” he wailed. “Oh, dear! What shall Ah do?”

“There, there, don’t cry, Baby Possum, don’t cry. Just come down here to me and I will see that Shadow the Weasel does not harm you,” said Reddy Fox, in his most pleasing voice.

Baby Possum waited no longer. “Ah guess Ah’ll come,” he said, and began to scramble down the tree. Then, just as had happened before, he looked over to the foot of the big pine tree and there was the funny little fellow with long ears shaking his head until the ears went flipperty-flap, flipperty-flap.

Somehow the funny little fellow with long ears looked so friendly and kind that down in his heart Baby Possum felt that here was a real friend. Baby Possum hesitated and then stopped. He looked at the funny little fellow with long ears again, and saw that he was shaking his head harder than ever. Then Baby Possum looked down at Reddy Fox. Reddy had forgotten about his teeth and was smiling. Somehow Baby Possum felt more afraid of those teeth than of Shadow the Weasel.

“Ah—Ah tell you what; go, go bring mah mammy, ol’ Mrs. Possum, and Ah’ll wait,” said Baby Possum, once more climbing back to the safe, snug little hollow.

Reddy Fox hid his anger and disappointment as best he could. “All right,” said he, and started off through the green forest.

## STORY 145. July 26, 1912.

### Baby Possum Grows Lonesome.

Reddy Fox sat at the foot of the black birch tree and watched the safe, snug little hollow into which Baby Possum had scrambled. Reddy Fox had been so sure that this time Baby Possum was really coming down that in spite of himself he had smiled as he

thought how good that possum baby would taste. Then Reddy Fox had pretended to go away, but he did not go far, and now here he was back at the foot of the tree.

Reddy Fox sat and scratched one ear as he tried to think of some new plan that would get Baby Possum down on the ground. Every plan he had tried so far had failed.

“Perhaps,” said Reddy Fox to himself. “Perhaps if I go off and hide, Baby Possum will grow tired of staying up there and will come down. I believe I’ll try it.”

Reddy pretended to yawn. “Goodbye, Baby Possum!” he called. “I can’t spend any more time here because I’ve got too many other things to do. I’ll go back by the hollow tree and tell old Mrs. Possum that you don’t care anything about her, and that you wouldn’t come home when you had the chance. I hope Shadow the Weasel will not find you, because—well, Shadow the Weasel is very fond of young Possum. He told me so himself.”

With that Reddy Fox got to his feet, stretched, yawned and then trotted off into the Green Forest, just as if he really meant to do as he had said he would.

Baby Possum had poked his sharp little face out of the safe, snug little hollow when Reddy Fox began to speak, and now his little, sharp black eyes watched Reddy Fox out of sight. Reddy never once turned his head, and Baby Possum saw him disappear behind a thick young hemlock tree.

It was very, very still in the Green Forest. Baby Possum began to feel lonelier and lonelier and lonelier. He kept thinking of Shadow the Weasel, and every time he thought of Shadow the Weasel little shivers of fright ran up and down the backbone of Baby Possum. It grew lonelier and lonelier and lonelier. Baby Possum sat hunched up in a little hunch on a branch of the black birch tree, and the first thing he knew he was crying.

Yes, sir, Baby Possum was crying. “Boo-hoo-hoo. Ah wish Ah hadn’t run away from home. Boo-hoo-hoo, Ah wants mah mammy,” sobbed Baby Possum.

Now, Reddy Fox hadn’t gone away at all, but all the time was lying flat on his stomach behind the thick young hemlock tree. When he heard Baby Possum cry, Reddy Fox chuckled to himself.

“He’ll come down pretty soon now,” thought, Reddy Fox, and smacked his lips.

## STORY 146. July 27, 1912.

### Baby Possum Has an Idea.

Baby Possum sat all hunched up on a branch of the black birch tree crying because he was lonesome and afraid. He was afraid just because he was lonesome, and he was afraid, too, that Shadow the Weasel might find him, and Reddy Fox had said that Shadow the Weasel would gobble him up.

The tears ran down to the end of Baby Possum’s sharp little nose and fell one by one in little shiny drops down to the ground. Suddenly Baby Possum remembered

Illustrations. July 22 to July 27, 1912.



141. What Peter Rabbit Saw



142. The Gentleman in Red



143. Baby Possum Changes his Mind



144. Reddy Fox Tries to Scare Baby Possum



145. Baby Possum Grows Lonesome



146. Baby Possum has an Idea



something. He stopped crying and began to think. Every time he had started to climb down the black birch tree when the fine gentleman in red had been sitting below Baby Possum had seen a funny little fellow with long ears stick his head out from behind a big pine tree and shake his head until it seemed as if he would shake it off.

Baby Possum didn't know who the fine gentleman in red was, and he didn't know who the funny little fellow with long ears was, but somehow he felt that the funny little fellow with long ears was a friend. So each time when the latter had shaken his head Baby Possum had climbed back to the safe, snug little hollow in the black birch tree.

As he thought of all this Baby Possum looked in the direction in which the fine gentleman in red had gone. He was nowhere to be seen. Then Baby Possum looked over to the foot of the big pine tree, but the funny little fellow with long ears was not in sight.

"Ah wonder," said Baby Possum to himself, "ah wonder if that funny fellow who shook his head at me is still behind that tree. He seemed to want me to stay up here, and—and perhaps Ah'd better."

Just then he noticed that a branch of the tree in which he was sitting touched a branch of another tree, and that a branch of this other tree touched a branch of the big pine behind which the funny little fellow with long ears had been hiding. Baby Possum had an idea. He would climb into the next tree and from that into the big pine tree, and then perhaps he could surprise the funny little fellow with long ears and find out why he shook his head so much. Baby Possum wiped away his tears and his eyes began to sparkle.

Very carefully Baby Possum crept out along the branch leading over into the next tree. He held on with his hands and his feet and his tail. And sometimes he held his breath. In the same careful way he climbed from the other tree into the big pine. Then he drew a long breath and looked down. Sure enough, there at the foot of the tree, lying flat on his stomach, was the little fellow with long ears. Somehow Baby Possum didn't feel lonesome any more.

All this time the fine gentleman in red, who, as of course you know, was Reddy Fox, was hiding behind the thick young hemlock tree. He was waiting there for Baby Possum to come down. You see, Reddy Fox meant to have Baby Possum for his dinner. Now, from where he lay Reddy could not see the branch of the black birch tree that led over into the next tree. Reddy had closed his eyes for just a minute, and when he opened them Baby Possum, who had been sitting all hunched up on a branch of the black birch tree, had disappeared.

"He's gone back into his safe, snug little hollow, but pretty soon he'll grow tired of that and will come down," thought Reddy Fox.

So he stretched himself out more comfortably, and waited and waited and waited.

STORY 147. July 29, 1912.

## Something Drops on Peter Rabbit's Nose

Peter Rabbit lay stretched flat on his stomach behind a big pine tree in the Green Forest. He was trying hard to watch two people at the same time, and he was finding it hard work. Over behind a thick young hemlock tree Reddy Fox was hiding. A little way off, up in a black birch tree, was Baby Possum. Peter Rabbit found it the hardest kind of work to watch both. Finally he gave it up.

"If watch Reddy Fox he can't catch Baby Possum without I see what he is doing, and as he is watching Baby Possum I'll just keep my eyes on him," thought Peter. So he didn't see Baby Possum when he started on his climb from one tree to another, and from that right into the very pine tree behind which Peter Rabbit was hiding.

Reddy Fox didn't see Baby Possum climb out of the black birch tree, either, for Reddy had closed his eyes for just a little minute, and when he had opened them again Baby Possum was nowhere to be seen. Reddy Fox thought that, of course, Baby Possum had gone back into the safe, snug little hollow in the black birch tree where he had been hiding, so Reddy just made himself more comfortable and waited and waited and dreamed of how good Baby Possum would taste when he came down where Reddy could catch him. Safe in the big pine tree, Baby Possum had looked down and seen the funny little fellow with long ears who had shaken his head every time Baby Possum had started to climb down out of the black birch tree. Baby Possum saw that the funny little fellow with long ears was looking very hard at a thick young hemlock tree. Baby Possum looked over there, too. His little eyes opened wide as he saw, lying at on his stomach behind the young hemlock tree, the very same fine gentleman in red who had told him that he was going away. Then Baby Possum knew why it was that the funny little fellow with long ears had shaken his head at him every time he had started to come down to the fine gentleman in red.

"It must be that the fine gentleman in red meant me no good," said Baby Possum to himself. I guess I'll ask the funny little fellow with long ears." Baby Possum crawled out on a branch and broke off a pine cone. Then he climbed back until he was right over the funny little fellow with long ears. Baby Possum dropped the pine cone. Down, down, down it went, and landed right square on the nose of the little fellow with long ears. My, how he jumped! It tickled Baby Possum so that he nearly lost his balance and fell after the pine cone.

Of course, that funny little fellow with long ears was Peter Rabbit. When the pine cone landed on the end of Peter's nose, Peter nearly gave himself away to Reddy Fox by the jump he made. Then he looked up in the tree to see where the pine cone had come from. There he saw Baby Possum laughing and tickling. Peter was so astonished to see Baby Possum there in the big pine tree that he just stared with his mouth wide open. Then he beckoned to Baby Possum to come down.

STORY 148. July 30, 1912.

## Peter Rabbit and Baby Possum Fool Reddy Fox

When Peter Rabbit looked up in the big pine tree to see what had made the pine cone drop on his nose, he was so surprised by the sight of Baby Possum up there that he could hardly get his breath. Baby Possum was laughing at him fit to kill himself, but Peter Rabbit didn't mind that. He hopped to his feet and beckoned for Baby Possum to come down. At the same time Peter Rabbit put one hand on his lips and shook his head.

At first this puzzled Baby Possum. Then he understood that Peter Rabbit was asking him to come down, but not to speak, and to make no noise. Baby Possum remembered the gentleman in red hiding behind the thick young hemlock tree and guessed that the funny little fellow with long ears didn't want the gentleman in red to hear. So Baby Possum climbed down until he was near enough to lean over and ask in a loud whisper, "Who are you?"

"I'm a friend and my name is Peter Rabbit," replied Peter, in a whisper. Baby Possum smiled and smiled. "Ah reckon mah daddy knows yo' all," said he. "Ah reckon yo' all gave us a surprise party when mah mammy came up to the Green Meadows."

Peter Rabbit grinned good-naturedly and nodded his head. "Come down here," he whispered.

Baby Possum hesitated. Then very slowly he climbed down beside Peter Rabbit. "Don't make a bit of noise, not the teeniest, weeniest bit," whispered Peter Rabbit.

"Why not?" asked Baby Possum in a very tiny whisper.

"Because Reddy Fox might hear you, and he is waiting to gobble you up," replied Peter Rabbit.

Baby Possum looked this way and that way and his little black eyes grew round with fear. "Who—who is Reddy Fox?" he asked.

"There he is," replied Peter Rabbit in a whisper, pointing over to the thick young hemlock tree. Baby Possum looked and there lay the fine gentleman in red who had tried to get him to come down out of the black birch tree.

"You must never believe anything that Reddy Fox tells you," continued Peter Rabbit. "That is why I shook my head at you when you started down the black birch tree, for I knew that all he wanted was to get you down on the ground, where he could gobble you up. You come with me and we'll fool him, for he still thinks that you are up in the black birch tree. Come on, but be very, very careful not to make a bit of noise."

At first Baby Possum was afraid to go, but when he remembered how dreadfully lonesome he had been he was more afraid to be left. So off through the Green Forest stole Peter Rabbit, Baby Possum right at his heels. Peter took the greatest care to always have a big tree between them and Reddy Fox, so that Reddy wouldn't see them, and both took the greatest care not to make the teeniest, weeniest noise; not so much as

the rustle of a leaf.

And all this time Reddy Fox lay flat on his stomach, behind the thick young hemlock tree, watching the black birch tree where he thought Baby Possum was hiding in the safe, snug little hollow. "I'll get him when he comes down," said Reddy Fox over and over to himself.

## STORY 149. July 31, 1912.

### Shadow the Weasel Laughs at Reddy Fox

Reddy Fox lay flat on his stomach behind the thick young hemlock tree and watched the black birch tree in which he thought that Baby Possum was still hiding. He was getting hungrier and hungrier, but still he waited and waited, for Reddy Fox was taught when he was a very little fellow that nothing is so sure to bring success as patience. So Reddy Fox waited and waited and waited and grew hungrier and hungrier and hungrier.

"It must be," said Reddy Fox to himself, "that Baby Possum has gone to sleep."

Now, the ears of Reddy Fox are very quick to hear the least little sound, and the eyes of Reddy Fox are very quick to see the least little movement. As he lay watching the black birch tree Reddy Fox heard a leaf rustle behind him. Quick as a flash he turned his head. At first he didn't see anything but the trees of the Green Forest and the dry leaves on the ground. Then he saw something move so quickly and so still that it was almost like a shadow. Almost before he was sure that he really saw it was gone behind a tree. Reddy Fox smiled as he said to himself: "It's Shadow the Weasel." In a flash Reddy Fox had jumped to his feet and was over to the tree. Sure enough, behind it was Shadow the Weasel.

"Hello!" said Reddy Fox.

"Hello!" replied Shadow the Weasel, in a voice that was not at all as if he was glad to see Reddy Fox. You see Shadow the Weasel had not forgotten how Reddy Fox had sent him into the old brier patch after Peter Rabbit and how Peter Rabbit had fooled him there until Shadow had lost his way<sup>45</sup>.

"Have you heard that Baby Possum is lost in the Green Forest?" asked Reddy Fox.

Shadow the Weasel pricked up his ears with interest. "Yes," he replied.

"How would you like to find him?" asked Reddy Fox, smiling wickedly, and winking one eye.

The cruel little eyes of Shadow the Weasel snapped, but he said nothing.

"I can tell you where he is and you can get him in about two minutes," said Reddy Fox.

"Where is he?" asked Shadow the Weasel eagerly, and Reddy Fox could see his mouth water

45      Story 125.

“He’s taking a nap up in a snug little hollow in that black birch tree,” replied Reddy Fox.

Shadow the Weasel waited to hear no more but started for the black birch tree and ran up it even faster than Happy Jack Squirrel could have. Reddy watched him and chuckled. “Baby Possum will hear him coming and will be so frightened that he will run down and then I’ll have him,” thought Reddy Fox.

But Baby Possum didn’t run out. Reddy saw Shadow the Weasel thrust his head into the snug little hollow. Then he looked down at Reddy Fox and glared at him.

“Isn’t—isn’t he there?” asked Reddy Fox.

“No!” snapped Shadow the Weasel. “He’s been gone a long time.” Then he began to laugh at Reddy Fox and to make fun of him. “A smart hunter you are, Reddy Fox! A smart hunter you are!” he exclaimed. “Ha, ha, ha! A smart hunter you are! Baby Possum climbed over into another tree and gone away. Ha, ha, ha!” You see Shadow’s wonderful little nose told him just how Baby Possum had got away.

Reddy Fox ground his teeth and sneaked off through the Green Forest, and in his heart was black rage.

## STORY 150. August 1, 1912.

### Baby Possum and Peter Rabbit Have an Adventure

Baby Possum was getting his first real lesson in how to take care of himself in the Green Forest. Always before when there had been danger, he had had Mammy Possum’s big pocket to climb into and feel safe. Now it was all so different. Here he was tiptoeing along behind Peter Rabbit, so as not to make the least little bit of noise for fear that Reddy Fox, who was hiding over behind the thick young hemlock tree, would hear them.

Every few minutes Peter Rabbit would stop, sit up very straight, and with his funny long ears listen and listen. At those times Baby Possum would crouch in a little bunch and listen and listen till it seemed as if his own heart thumped so loud that he couldn’t hear anything else.

Farther and farther they got away from where Reddy Fox was hiding, until finally Peter Rabbit kicked up his heels and then began to laugh. Baby Possum gave a great sigh of relief and began to laugh, too.

“I wish I could see Reddy Fox when he discovers that you are not up in the black birch tree where he thinks you are. I really do. My, won’t he be mad!” said Peter Rabbit.

“Ah wish Ah wasn’t so little. Ah wish Ah was growed up like you’all, Peter Rabbit. Then Ah wouldn’t have to be afraid of Reddy Fox and Shadow the Weasel,” said Baby Possum as he looked up at Peter Rabbit admiringly.

Peter made a wry face. “I’ll tell you something, Baby Possum,” said he. “Reddy

Fox spends half his time hunting for me, and I wouldn't like to meet him right this minute any more than you would. But I don't lose any sleep just being afraid of him. Oh, my, no! I just keep my wits sharper than his are. Now let's hurry along so as to get home to your hollow tree, where you will be safe."

They hurried along through the Green Forest, and, just as before, Peter Rabbit kept sitting up and listening. Once after doing this, he squatted down in a hurry and whispered in Baby Possum's ear.

"Someone is following us and we must hurry, hurry, hurry!" whispered Peter Rabbit, excitedly.

He started off, lipperty-lipperty-lip; so fast that almost in a minute Baby Possum lost sight of him. Baby Possum began to cry, for you know he was a very little fellow and he didn't know anything about the dangers in the Green Forest, or even how to find his way home. In a few minutes, back came Peter looking for him. "I forgot you can't run so fast as I can," said Peter.

So Peter Rabbit hopped slowly, and behind him Baby Possum scurried as fast as his little legs would take him.

He was getting dreadfully out of breath and oh so tired.

"Ah doan believe anybody's following we-alls," panted Baby Possum.

But Peter Rabbit, was sure that there was, and grew more worried every minute. Pretty soon they came to a very wet place where the water stood in puddles on the ground. Baby Possum stopped, for he didn't want to get his feet wet. Then before he knew what was coming, Peter Rabbit had pushed him right into one of the puddles. "Now follow me," whispered Peter Rabbit fiercely, hopping through one puddle after another, and Baby Possum was so frightened that he did.

Pretty soon they came to a hollow log into which Peter crawled and Baby Possum after him. Hardly were they safely inside, when, peeping out through a knot-hole, Baby Possum saw something long and slim, with fierce little eyes, running with its nose to the ground, and it was following the tracks of Baby Possum and Peter Rabbit. Right up to the first puddle of water it came, and then stopped and showed all its teeth in an angry snarl.

"It's Shadow the Weasel," whispered Peter Rabbit, "and he can't follow us any further because he cannot smell our tracks in the water."

## STORY 151. August 2, 1912.

### Baby Possum Has Another Scare

Peter Rabbit and Baby Possum, hiding in a hollow log, had watched Shadow the Weasel follow their tracks right down to the edge of a puddle of water through which they had waded. They had seen the fierce little eyes of Shadow the Weasel grow red with anger as he ran this way and ran that way with his nose to the ground trying to find

out where they had gone to. Finally, with an angry snarl, he gave it up and bounded away into the Green Forest.

Peter Rabbit gave a sigh of relief as he saw him go. “Now you know how good a friend water is sometimes. Not even Bowser the Hound’s wonderful nose can follow a track through water. Just remember that, Baby Possum,” said Peter Rabbit as they started again on their journey.

“Ah will,” said Baby Possum. “Ah sho’ly will.”

Pretty soon they came to the Laughing Brook, where it comes down through the Green Forest. Peter led the way across on a lot of big stones which came above the water. Baby Possum followed. He shook as he jumped from one stone to another, for he was a very little fellow, you know, and he was dreadfully afraid of falling into the Laughing Brook.

Finally, he came to two stones so far apart that his heart sank. Yes, sir; his heart sank way down to his toes. However, ever, ever, could he jump across there? It had been easy for Peter Rabbit, for his legs are long, but Baby Possum just didn’t dare jump.

He looked this way and that way to see if there was another place to cross, but nowhere could he see one. Then he looked down at the Laughing Brook once more. What was that between the two big stones where Peter had jumped across? Baby Possum rubbed his eyes and looked again. There, just within easy reach was a smooth looking stone which came just above the water. It was funny, very, very funny that he hadn’t noticed it before! Well, he wouldn’t wait any longer. Baby Possum hopped down on to the newly found stone and then—well, then something happened. Peter Rabbit saw it happen, and it tickled him so that he laughs even now whenever he thinks of it.

But Baby Possum didn’t laugh. My, my, no indeed! Baby Possum was so frightened that he just held his breath. The stone was floating away with him! Yes, sir! The stone was actually floating off in the Laughing Brook with Baby Possum hunched up on the middle of it, holding on as best he could with hands and feet, while his long, funny, slim little tail hung over in the water. Tommy Trout saw it and wondered if it was something good to eat. Like a flash he nipped the end of it to see. Poor Baby Possum! He pulled his funny little tail out of the water in a hurry and curled it around him closely. And then he drifted on, and on. It certainly was a queer stone.

(Published as single-story book “Baby Possum Has a Scare” by John H. Eggers, 1928)

## STORY 152. August 3, 1912.

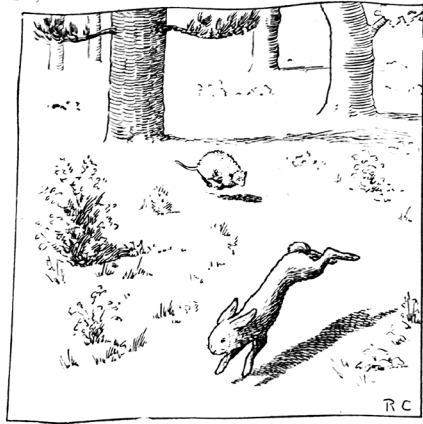
### Baby Possum’s Queer Voyage.

Baby Possum didn’t know what to make of it. Here he was out in the middle of the Laughing Brook riding on the queerest craft you can imagine. When Baby Possum had hopped on to it he had thought it just a stone. But whoever heard of a stone that floated

Illustrations. July 29 to August 3, 1912.



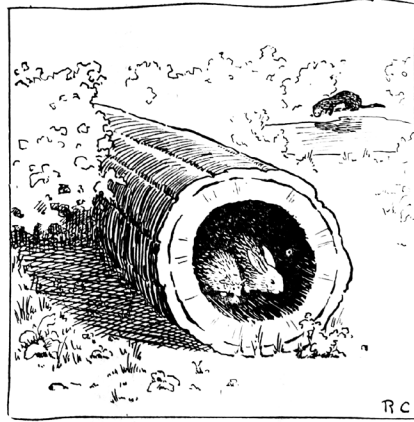
147. Something Drops on Peter Rabbit's Nose



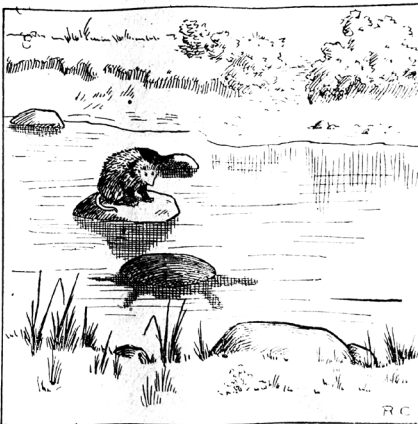
148. Peter Rabbit and Baby Possum Fool Reddy Fox



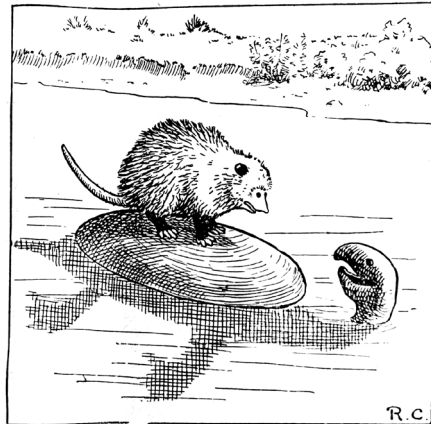
149. Shadow the Weasel Laughs at Reddy



150. Baby Possum and Peter Rabbit Have an Adventure



151. Baby Possum Has a Another Scare



152. Baby Possum's Queer Voyage



or that when it wasn't floating swam? Well, that is just what Baby Possum's queer craft, which he had thought was a stone, was doing.

At first Baby Possum was too frightened to notice anything. By and by, when he found that his queer craft really kept on top of the water, he began to timidly look around. How dreadfully far away the shore looked! "If Ah ever get back there safely once more Ah cert'nly never, never will try to cross a brook again," said Baby Possum to himself.

"How do you like your ride?" asked a voice, which seemed to come from somewhere close at hand.

Baby Possum looked everywhere up in the air, but he could see no one excepting jolly, round, red Mr. Sun, who was looking down through the trees and laughing.

"Don't look so high for your friends," said the same voice, with a funny little chuckle.

Baby Possum looked hard at both banks, but no one was in sight save Peter Rabbit, and the voice certainly was not Peter's.

"I say, how do you like your ride?" asked the voice once more.

This time Baby Possum looked down on the water. There, sticking out of the water just in front of his queer craft was a funny little black head with two little eyes that twinkled good naturedly.

"Did—did yo' all speak to me, sah?" asked Baby Possum.

"I most certainly did!" replied the stranger in the water, opening his mouth very wide in order to laugh heartily. Baby Possum noticed that not a tooth was to be seen; and that the stranger's lips were hard.

"Where—where is the rest of yo' all?" inquired Baby Possum, as he realized that he hadn't seen any body or legs or arms, just a head sticking out of the water.

The stranger opened his mouth again and laughed and laughed and laughed.

"You're sitting on it," he finally managed to say between laughs. Baby Possum was so startled that he nearly fell into the water.

"What—what did yo' say?" he gasped, his little eyes nearly popping out of his head.

"I said that you are sitting on me," said the stranger. "You are on my back this very minute, and if you'll look down in the water on each side you can see my arms and legs move when I swim."

"Ah thought Ah was sitting on a stone," gasped Baby Possum. "If yo please, sah, who might y' -alls be?"

The stranger laughed harder than ever. "I'm Snapper the Turtle," said he. "And now I'm going to give you the greatest ride you have ever had, and then I'll put you safe on shore."

And Snapper the Turtle did.

(Published as a single-story book by John H. Eggers 1924)

## STORY 153. August 5, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Almost Succeeds.

Reddy Fox was hurrying through the Green Forest. Reddy was in a very bad temper indeed. His ears still burned with the laugh of Shadow the Weasel when Shadow had found the snug little hollow in the black birch tree empty. Reddy had been sure that Baby Possum was in there, and then to find that Baby Possum had actually fooled him and had gotten safely away was bad enough, but to have Shadow the Weasel find it out and laugh at him was worse. Reddy Fox felt sure that Shadow would tell everybody he met and Reddy knew that then everybody in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows would make fun of him.

So Reddy Fox trotted through the Green Forest in a very bad temper. He was hungry. He had been sure that he was going to have Baby Possum for his dinner that day and now—well, he would have to find something else. So he hurried along, keeping his eyes wide open but seeing nothing to eat. Presently he came to the Laughing Brook where it runs through the Green Forest. Perhaps he could catch a fish. Reddy Fox stole up to the edge of the bank and peeped over. What he saw made him duck down out of sight in a hurry. Then Reddy Fox smiled a broad smile, a very broad smile indeed. What had she seen? Why, right out in the Laughing Brook was Baby Possum himself, having a ride on the back of Snapper the Turtle. And there on the other bank of the Laughing Brook was Peter Rabbit dancing a funny little jig and waving to Baby Possum.

Reddy Fox lay perfectly still and peeped through the bushes. Pretty soon he heard Snapper the Turtle tell Baby Possum that he would land Baby Possum on the other side. Reddy grinned to himself. "I'll be right there when he does," thought Reddy, "and then"—Reddy licked his lips as if he already could taste something pretty nice.

Then Reddy crept back from the edge of the Laughing Brook until he was sure that he couldn't be seen by anyone in the brook. Back he crept and then hurried as fast as he could go up to a crossing place of which he knew. Once across he hurried down until he was nearly to the place where he had seen Baby Possum and Snapper the Turtle. It wouldn't do to let Peter Rabbit know that he was anywhere near, so Reddy crawled along on his stomach until he reached a mossy old log. Behind this Reddy lay flat down and waited.

Pretty soon Reddy Fox heard Snapper the Turtle paddling to the shore and then right at the very end of the very log behind which Reddy Fox was hiding Baby Possum hopped ashore. Reddy Fox waited until Baby Possum had climbed the bank. Then Reddy wriggled himself around and made ready to spring. Baby Possum was surely his this time! Reddy's hungry eyes were yellow and fierce. He drew himself together to spring and then—why, Reddy Fox yelled with surprise and fright instead.

## STORY 154. August 6, 1912.

### Why Reddy Fox Could Not Jump

Peter Rabbit, waiting on the bank of the Laughing Brook deep in the Green Forest for Baby Possum to scramble up, was startled by a wild yell. Peter jumped. He jumped so that he nearly fell over backward. You see, Peter had thought that no one was near excepting Baby Possum and Snapper the Turtle, and this voice was the voice of Reddy Fox. Worse still, it was close to Peter. For a minute Peter Rabbit was badly frightened. So was little Baby Possum, who was climbing up the bank. Indeed, Baby Possum was so badly frightened that he nearly rolled down the bank into the Laughing Brook.

Peter turned to see where Reddy Fox was and what he saw made Peter's eyes almost pop out of his head. There was Reddy, sure enough! But Reddy Fox didn't look fierce and dangerous as he usually did. Instead, Reddy Fox actually looked more frightened than little Baby Possum, who already had begun to climb the nearest tree. And Reddy Fox was still yelling, and in his eyes were great big tears of fright. Reddy was struggling and trying to pull himself up the bank, but something seemed to be pulling him back.

At first Peter Rabbit couldn't make out what it all meant. Then down In the Laughing Brook, Peter saw a funny black head with two little eyes that snapped and twinkled. It was Snapper the Turtle, and held fast in Snapper's mouth was the long hair on the tip of the beautiful big tail of Reddy Fox.

Peter Rabbit understood it all then. Of course Reddy Fox had been hiding there waiting for Baby Possum to climb up the bank. When he had got ready to jump on poor little Baby Possum, Reddy had let his tail hang down over the water. Snapper the Turtle had seen it and Snapper, who is much smarter than he looks, had guessed right away what Reddy Fox was doing there. So Snapper the Turtle had reached up and grabbed the tip of Reddy's tail just as Reddy started to jump.

"Hold on, Snapper! Hold on!" shouted Peter Rabbit, dancing about in great excitement. "Don't let go!" Of course, Snapper the Turtle couldn't say a word because he had his mouth full, but Peter knew from the twinkle in Snapper's eyes that he would hold on as long as he could. So Peter called Baby Possum down from the tree up which he had started to climb, and together they hurried off as fast as they could go, while Snapper the Turtle held Reddy Fox fast. And as they went Reddy Fox could hear Peter Rabbit laughing fit to kill himself.

## STORY 155. August 7, 1912.

### Home at Last

As fast as ever they could Peter Rabbit and Baby Possum ran away from the Laughing Brook, where Snapper the Turtle was holding Reddy Fox fast by the tail. On, on they ran through the Green Forest, and always Peter Rabbit kept watching behind for fear that Reddy Fox might have gotten away and be following them. Baby Possum

was so tired and so out of breath that he could hardly walk when they met Prickly Porky the Porcupine. Baby Possum had never met him before and Prickly Porky was such a queer-looking fellow that Baby Possum was afraid and started to climb a tree.

“Hi, Baby Possum! What are you doing that for?” shouted Peter Rabbit.

“Because Ah’m a little mite skeery,” said Baby Possum.

Peter Rabbit laughed. “Prickly Porky won’t hurt you. Besides, it wouldn’t help you any to climb a tree, for he can climb just as well as you can. In fact, he lives most of the time in the tree tops,” said Peter Rabbit.

Baby Possum stopped climbing and then very slowly he slid back to the foot of the tree and eyed Prickly Porky doubtfully. Prickly Porky smiled, and when Baby Possum saw Prickly Porky’s long teeth, Baby Possum was more frightened than ever, and backed away hurriedly.

But just then they heard footsteps pattering over the dry leaves and there was Reddy Fox hurrying along with his nose to the ground in the tracks of Peter Rabbit and Baby Possum. His tongue was hanging out and he was panting for breath, because he had hurried so. He saw Baby Possum first, and his yellow eyes gleamed as he leaped forward. Poor little Baby Possum was too frightened to move.

“I’ve got you this time!” snarled Reddy Fox. Hardly were the words out of Reddy’s mouth when he heard a sound that made him stop short and all the fierceness died out of his eyes. It was a queer rattling sound. Reddy Fox had heard it before and he really didn’t need to look up to find out what it meant. Of course, it was Prickly Porky rattling the thousand little spears hidden in his long coat. Prickly Porky stepped, between Reddy Fox and Baby Possum and once more rattled his thousand little spears. Reddy Fox backed away.

Then Baby Possum knew that he had nothing to fear from Prickly Porky, and when the latter told him to trot along after Peter Rabbit, Baby Possum did so with a light heart. And so they marched through the Green Forest, Peter Rabbit hopping along in front to show the way, behind him Baby Possum, and last of all Prickly Porky rattling his thousand little spears. So they came to the hollow tree where Unc’ Billy and Old Mrs. Possum live.

“Here we are!” shouted Peter Rabbit.

Old Mrs. Possum rushed out at the sound of Peter’s voice, and when she saw her lost baby she hurried to take him into her big pocket. But Baby Possum wouldn’t go in. No, sir, Baby Possum wouldn’t go into Old Mrs. Possum’s big pocket.

“Ah ain’t a baby no mo’,” said he and started to climb up the hollow tree.

And back in the shadow of the Green Forest Reddy Fox ground his teeth in hunger and anger as he watched, for he knew now that Baby Possum had learned to look out for himself.

## STORY 156. August 8, 1912.

### Jerry Muskrat is Laughed At.

Jerry Muskrat sat on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool. Jerry Muskrat was very thoughtful. He paid no attention to Little Joe Otter, who was having a beautiful time on his slippery slide. He paid no attention to Billy Mink, who was fishing in the Laughing Brook just where it joins the Smiling Pool. He paid no attention to Grandfather Frog, who was sitting on his big green lily-pad watching for foolish green files. Jerry Muskrat paid no attention to any one; he just sat and thought and thought and thought.

Little Joe Otter swam over. "Wake up, Jerry Muskrat!" shouted Little Joe Otter, splashing the water up in Jerry Muskrat's face.

Jerry shook the water off and made up a face at Little Joe Otter. Then he climbed a little farther up on the Big Rock and once more began to think, and think and think. By and by he hopped to his feet, smoothed out his brown coat and walked over to the edge of the Big Rock.

"I believe I'll begin right away," said Jerry Muskrat aloud, as he prepared to dive into the Smiling Pool.

"Begin what?" asked Billy Mink, who happened to be near enough to hear.

"My new house for the winter," replied Jerry Muskrat.

Billy Mink stared at him. "Winter is a long, long way off," said Billy Mink. "What do you want to begin your house now for? You're foolish, Jerry Muskrat; you're foolish. Come on, have some fun!"

Jerry Muskrat shook his head. "It's going to be a long, hard, cold, cold winter, and I want to be ready for it early. Then I'll come and play."

Billy Mink looked hard at Jerry Muskrat to see if he really meant what he said. Jerry looked so sober and earnest that Billy Mink just had to believe that Jerry meant every word. Then Billy began to laugh. He called Little Joe Otter over and told him what Jerry Muskrat had said. Then Little Joe Otter began to laugh, too. Here it was beautiful warm weather and winter a long, long way off, yet Jerry Muskrat pretended to know what kind of a winter it would be and to talk of getting ready for it now. It was absurd. It was foolish. What could Jerry know about it? Jerry must be crazy. So they laughed at him and made fun of him. They told the Merry Little Breezes, who told Spotty the Turtle and Mrs. Redwing and Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow and Grandfather Frog.

Jerry's crazy as a loon!  
Pretty soon he'll want the moon.  
When the sun is shining bright  
Jerry thinks it's almost night.  
See him shiver in the sun!  
Thinks that winter has begun.

Jerry's crazy as a loon!  
Pretty soon he'll want the moon.

So sang Billy Mink, and then everybody laughed at Jerry Muskrat, everybody but Grandfather Frog. "Chugarum!" exclaimed Grandfather Frog.

"If Jerry Muskrat says we are to have a cold winter we surely will have a cold winter<sup>46</sup>. Jerry Muskrat knows." Jerry Muskrat looked over at Grandfather Frog and smiled.

(Published as a single-story book by John H. Eggers.)

## STORY 157. August 9, 1912.

### Jerry Muskrat Wins Respect

When Jerry Muskrat had said that the winter would be hard and cold and that he was going to build a new house and make ready for it, all the little people of the Smiling Pool and the Green Meadows had laughed at him, for it was still summer. So they had laughed and made fun of Jerry Muskrat, all but Grandfather Frog.

Now Grandfather Frog is very old and is accounted very wise. So when Grandfather Frog refused to laugh, but instead said that Jerry Muskrat knew, everybody else stopped laughing and began to look at Jerry Muskrat with something very like respect. If Grandfather Frog said it was so, it must be so.

One of the Merry Little Breezes blew a foolish green fly almost into the mouth of Grandfather Frog. "Chugarum!" said Grandfather Frog as he smacked his lips and smoothed down his white and yellow waistcoat.

"If you please, Grandfather Frog, how can Jerry Muskrat know anything about the winter when it is such a long, long way off?" asked the Merry Little Breeze.

"Why don't you ask Jerry?" replied Grandfather Frog, who had his big goggly eyes fixed on another foolish green fly headed his way.

The Merry Little Breeze danced over to Jerry Muskrat. "Tell us, Jerry, please tell us how it is that you know it is going to be a hard winter," begged the Merry Little Breeze.

Jerry shook his head mournfully. "I don't know how I know, but I do know," said he. "It's down inside. Yesterday I didn't know it. I didn't think anything about winter, and if I had I wouldn't have known any more about it than you do. But this morning, as soon as I was awake, something down inside told me that we are going to have a hard, long, long winter and that I must build a new house. I'm not guessing; I know. Now I guess I'll go look for the best place to build my new house."

Grandfather Frog had been listening all the time, although not once had he taken his eyes off the foolish green fly that was coming his way. Now he made a funny little

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<sup>46</sup> The idea that some animals are able to predict the coming winter will be discredited in future Burgess stories

hop up in the air, the foolish green fly disappeared, and Grandfather Frog sat down again with the most satisfied air.

“Chugarum!” said Grandfather Frog, patting his white and yellow waistcoat. “Jerry Muskrat knows because he knows.”

“Pooh! Grandfather Frog, that’s no reason at all!” cried Little Joe Otter.

Grandfather Frog grinned good naturedly. “I guess that you are right,” said he. “That isn’t much of a reason. But if you really want to know the reason Jerry Muskrat knows, it is because Old Mother Nature whispered it in his ear while he was asleep last night. Yes, sir, Old Mother Nature has whispered the news of what the winters would be in the ears of the Muskrats ever since the days when the world was young. Some time, perhaps, I’ll tell you how it happens that Mother Nature tells this secret to the Muskrats.”

“Tell us now!” begged the Merry Little Breezes. But Grandfather Frog shook his head. And from that time everybody had the greatest respect for Jerry Muskrat.

(Published as a single-story book by John H. Eggers.)

## STORY 158. August 10, 1912.

### Jerry Muskrat Begins to Build

Jerry Muskrat had been round and round the Smiling Pool and up and down the Laughing Brook looking for a place to build his new house. He was very particular, was Jerry Muskrat, about the place where he was to build. It had got to be just so. Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter had shown him a dozen places which they thought would be splendid for Jerry’s new house. Each time Jerry had shaken his head and kept right on looking. Finally Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter had gone off in disgust.

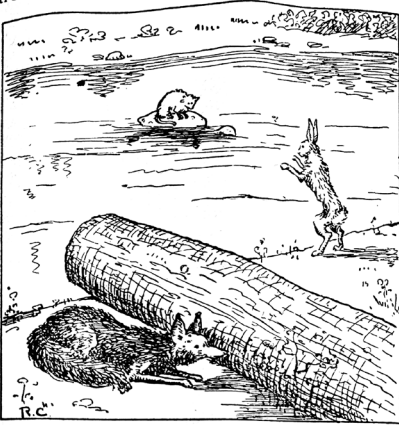
“He doesn’t know what he wants himself!” said Little Joe Otter. “Let’s go fishing.”

“Bet I can catch more than you can!” cried Billy Mink, and off the two little brown-coated scamps started, leaving Jerry Muskrat to keep on looking for a place to build.

Now, Jerry Muskrat did know what he wanted; he knew just what he wanted. It must be a place where the water would be still, for you see if there was a current it would carry away the things of which the house was to be built. It must be a place where the water was deep enough for Jerry to have one nice snug room wholly under water, with a door at the bottom. And the water must be so deep that Jack Frost would not be able to freeze it into ice clear to the bottom and so close up that little door down there, for that door must be open all the time. And yet the water must not be so deep that Jerry’s new house could not have its roof and a nice snug, dry bedroom quite above the little waves which the wind made.

Finally over among the bulrushes Jerry Muskrat found just the place for which he was looking. He put on his old clothes, took a long breath, and down he went to the

Illustrations. August 5 to August 10, 1912.



153. Reddy Fox Almost Succeeds



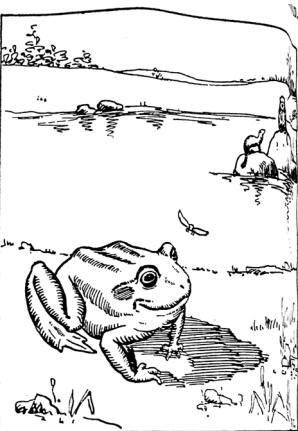
154. Why Reddy Fox Could Not Jump



155. Home at Last



156. Jerry Muskrat is Laughed At



157. Jerry Muskrat Wins Respect



158. Jerry Muskrat Begins to Build



bottom and began to cut away the rushes that were growing where he wanted his house to be. It was hard work, and every few minutes Jerry had to come up for a breath of fresh air and to rest. He could hear Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter having a beautiful time down the Laughing Brook and he did so want to join them. But down Inside something would tell him that he must build his house first. So Jerry would take a long breath and down he would go.

Pretty soon all the bulrushes that had been in the way were cut and nicely piled at one side. Then Jerry began to dig out his cellar. My, my, my! It certainly did make the water dreadfully muddy! By and by all the Smiling Pool was muddy, and then the muddy water got down to where Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter were fishing. At first they couldn't think where it came from. Of course it spoiled their fishing, for they could no longer see the fish. In disgust they went back to the Smiling Pool. It was even muddier than the Laughing Brook. Then way over among the bulrushes Billy Mink saw the water boiling up as if there was a terrible disturbance down underneath. A minute after up popped the head of Jerry Muskrat.

"Hi, Jerry Muskrat! You're spoiling our swimming water!" shouted Billy Mink, angrily.

"It don't belong to you," shouted Jerry Muskrat, and once more disappeared.

(Published as a single-story book by John H. Eggers.)

## STORY 159. August 12, 1912.

### Everybody Lends Jerry Muskrat a Hand

Just who started it nobody seems know, possibly it was the Merry Little Breezes, who are forever trying to do something for somebody else. Anyway, they did a lot of whispering and giggling as they watched Jerry Muskrat making ready to build his new house. Afterward they danced away across the Green Meadows. In a surprisingly short time all the little people who live in the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest seemed to know all about what was going on at the Smiling Pool. And they all seemed to have the same idea, which was, what do you think? Why, to help Jerry Muskrat to build his new house.

Jerry didn't ask for any help. Oh, my, no! Such a thought never entered the head of Jerry Muskrat. You see, there isn't a lazy bone in Jerry's plump little body.

Jerry Muskrat likes to work.  
And though he likes to play.  
He'll never, never, never shirk  
The duties of each day.

So when Old Mother Nature whispered in his ear that he ought to build a new house and make ready for a long, cold winter, Jerry started in to work right away. He didn't even mind when Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter made fun of him, but dug away down in the mud at the place where his new house was to be.

“What are you going to make it of?” asked Billy Mink as he sat kicking his heels on the big rock.

“Mud and sticks and bulrushes and grass,” replied Jerry Muskrat as he started to swim to where the alders grow beside the laughing brook. There he found Peter Rabbit sitting on the bank.

“Hello, Peter Rabbit!” said Jerry Muskrat, as he began cutting young alder shoots. When he had all he could carry, he started to carry them over to where he was building his new house.

Pretty soon Jerry was back in the alder thicket for another load and there he found the nicest, the very nicest kind of a surprise. Can you guess what it was? It was a great bundle of alder shoots all ready for him to push across the Smiling Pool. Yes, sir, there they were, and there was Peter Rabbit grinning and cutting more. Jerry Muskrat was so surprised he could hardly believe his own eyes, and he actually stuttered as he asked:

“Wha—wha—what does this mean, Peter Rabbit?” Peter grinned more broadly than ever as he replied:

“It means that I want to help build that new house, Jerry Muskrat, and I am going to cut all the alder shoots you need.”

Jerry Muskrat thanked Peter Rabbit and swam off with the alder shoots. Pretty soon he needed some willow shoots. When he reached the place where the willows grew he found another surprise—the nicest bundle of willow shoots, all cut, and Johnny Chuck cutting more.

“You can’t have all the fun to yourself building your own house!” cried Johnny Chuck, his eyes sparkling.

And so it was that everybody tried to lend a hand. Even Danny Meadow Mouse cut bulrushes, and Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter pushed them over to the new house. My! my! my! such a busy time in the Smiling Pool. And it was hard to tell who was happiest, Jerry Muskrat or those who were helping him.

(Published as a single-story book in 1953 by Samuel Lowe Company)

## STORY 160. August 13, 1912.

### Jerry Muskrat’s Secret Door

Jerry Muskrat’s new house was growing. Yes, indeed, it certainly was growing. With so many helpers to cut alder and willow shoots and bulrushes and to bring them to him, Jerry was kept busy just building. It was no time at all before the walls of Jerry Muskrat’s new house showed above the water, and then they grew higher and higher and higher.

Jerry Muskrat worked and worked and worked with might and main. You see no one could help him actually build the new house, because no one but himself knew just how it should be built. He put the willow and alder shoots just so. He placed rushes and

grass just where they were needed, and then he kept them in place with mud.

“That’s a queer looking house,” said Sammy Jay. “It looks to me like nothing but a pile of old rubbish.”

“Just you wait,” replied Jerry Muskrat, as he climbed up to place more bulrushes on the roof.

So Sammy Jay waited, for there was nothing else to do, and the house grew and grew and grew. By and by the roof was on and Jerry Muskrat sat on top of it to rest and eat his supper of fresh water clams, which he had brought up from the bottom of the Smiling Pool. Sammy Jay cocked his head on one side.

“Pooh!” said Sammy Jay. “That’s no kind of a house! It hasn’t any door.”

Jerry Muskrat just grinned and said nothing. He was too busy opening a fresh water clam for that. Sammy Jay began to laugh.

“What are you laughing at?” asked his cousin, Blacky the Crow.

“I am laughing at Jerry Muskrat. He’s built a new house, and it hasn’t any door. Ha, ha, ha!” replied Sammy Jay.

Blacky the Crow flew close down to Jerry Muskrat’s new house and looked it all over; that is, he looked at all that he could see. Sure enough, he could find no door. Then Blacky the Crow began to laugh too, and flew over on the Green Meadows to tell the little meadow people about the great joke on Jerry Muskrat—how he had built a house without any door.

But Jerry Muskrat didn’t seem to mind, not the teeniest, weeniest bit. When he had finished his last fresh water clam Jerry washed his face and combed his hair. His eyes twinkled as he shouted to Sammy Jay:

“Some folks believe just what they see,  
And think that nothing else can be.  
But some folks don’t know all they might—  
My door is hidden out of sight.”

Splash! Jerry Muskrat had dived into the Smiling Pool. Two minutes later he was making his bed of soft grass in the upper room of his new house.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #43)*

## STORY 161. August 14, 1912.

### Jerry Muskrat has Another Secret

No one but Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter had found the secret door to Jerry Muskrat’s new house. Billy Mink had watched Jerry dive from the top of the new house, and Jerry had not come up for a long, long time. Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter had put their two little brown heads together and decided that Jerry Muskrat’s secret door must be way down under water. So one day when Jerry Muskrat was off hunting

for fresh water clams, Billy Mink proposed that they hunt for Jerry's secret door.

"I'll beat you down to the bottom of the Smiling Pool," cried Little Joe Otter. Splash! The two little rascals were under water, and there was nothing but a great big ripple to tell where they had gone. It didn't take them long to find Jerry Muskrat's secret door, for really it wasn't secret at all for the little people of the Smiling Pool. Grandfather Frog's grandchildren, the polywogs, knew all about it. So did Mr. and Mrs. Trout. Billy Mink peeped inside. Little Joe Otter peeped inside. Then they swam back to the Big Rock and climbed up on it to dry off.

"Let's not say anything about it to Jerry Muskrat," said Billy Mink. "We'll get him to play hide and seek. Of course, he'll hide in his new house. Then we'll give him a surprise by finding the secret door."

So as soon as Jerry Muskrat came in sight, Billy Mink shouted to him:

"Hi, Jerry Muskrat! Bet you can't hide where we can't find you."

Jerry Muskrat's eyes twinkled. "Will you give me two minutes to hide?" he asked.

Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter agreed. Jerry Muskrat took a long breath and then dived out of sight. Little Joe Otter nudged Billy Mink, and they both chuckled as they watched Jerry Muskrat disappear. They waited two minutes.

"Now we will give Jerry Muskrat a surprise," said Billy Mink as they prepared to dive into the Smiling Pool.

Grandfather Frog, sitting on his big green lily pad, chuckled to himself as he watched them. "Chuga-rum!" said Grandfather Frog. "Somebody is going to be surprised, sure enough, but I'm not so sure that it will be Jerry Muskrat."

Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter swam straight to Jerry Muskrat's secret door and slipped inside. They were, in the nice little room Jerry had built under water, and right up above was the passage to Jerry's bedroom. It was so easy that they wanted to laugh, but they couldn't because they were under water you know, and had to hold their breath.

Up the passage they scrambled and in a minute were in Jerry Muskrat's snug little bedroom, which is warm and dry because it is above water.

"Didn't fool us this time did you Jerry Muskrat?" shouted Billy Mink. Then Billy blinked both eyes. Jerry Muskrat wasn't to be seen, no sir; Jerry Muskrat wasn't to be seen! They pulled his soft warm bed of grass to pieces, but no Jerry Muskrat.

Where was he? Perhaps if you ask Grandfather Frog or write to him<sup>47</sup> he will tell you, for this is Jerry Muskrat's other secret, and Grandfather Frog is the only one who knows it.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar no. 44)*

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47 This is the first in-story correspondence solicitation Burgess would make.

## STORY 162. August 15, 1912.

### Billy Mink Becomes a Boaster

Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter, and Jerry Muskrat sat on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool. Over on his big green lily pad sat Grandfather Frog. The Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind were playing with the buttercups and daisies on the bank, and Mrs. Redwing was singing to her babies in their cradle in the bulrushes.

Billy Mink was feeling very fine, very, very fine indeed, that morning. He had actually beaten Little Joe Otter<sup>48</sup> in a swimming race. He can't do it very often, but he had done it that morning and it made him feel very important. Now, when people begin to feel important, the feeling grows and grows. It was so with Billy Mink. He swelled himself up and began to walk back and forth on top of the Big Rock, and as he walked he began to boast. Yes, sir, Billy Mink began to boast.

"I can swim like a fish," said Billy Mink.

"Pooh! So can I," exclaimed Little Joe Otter.

"I can run like the wind!" boasted Billy Mink.

"Peter Rabbit can run faster!" said Jerry Muskrat.

"I can follow a track with my nose!" continued Billy Mink.

"So can Bowser the Hound," grunted Little Joe Otter.

"I can climb trees like a flash!" bragged Billy Mink.

"So can Happy Jack Squirrel," said Jerry Muskrat, sliding into the Smiling Pool in disgust.

"I can do anything that anybody who wears furs and lives on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest can do!" cried Billy Mink, and strutted up and down, up and down, on top of the Big Rock.

Grandfather Frog had listened and said nothing until Billy Mink had boasted that he could do anything that anybody else could do. Then he rolled his big goggly eyes up at jolly, round Mr. Sun and began to sing in a deep voice:

"The boaster brags what he can do:  
He swells his chest; his head swells, too.  
Someday he'll burst, and then you'll find  
He nothing had but empty mind."

Billy Mink stopped short and glared across at Grandfather Frog. "What's that you are saying?" demanded Billy Mink.

"Chugarum! I say you are a foolish boaster," replied Grandfather Frog, "for it is the easiest thing in the world to find somebody who wears fur to do something you can't do."

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48 Replaced with "Jerry Muskrat" in republished version.

“Who can?” asked Billy Mink.

“I’m not going to tell,” replied Grandfather Frog.

“You can’t, because you don’t know anyone,” sneered Billy Mink.

Grandfather Frog solemnly hopped up in the fair and caught a foolish green fly who came too near for his own good.

“I never say what I cannot prove, Billy Mink,” said Grandfather Frog in his deepest voice. “I will prove it to you tomorrow night at sundown if you will agree to be here.”

Of course, Billy Mink agreed. You see Little Joe Otter was listening, so he felt that he had to agree.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #36)*

## STORY 163. August 16, 1912.

### Billy Mink Feels Uncomfortable

Billy Mink was feeling uncomfortable. Yes, sir, way down deep inside Billy Mink was feeling uncomfortable. He was beginning to wish that he had not boasted so much the night before. He had said that he could do anything that any of the other little people who wore fur and lived in the Green Forest could do. Grandfather Frog had called him a boaster, and had said that he knew someone who could do something that Billy Mink could not do, and that if Billy Mink would be at the Smiling Pool at sundown that night he would prove it. Billy Mink had had to say that he would be there for you see Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat were listening.

Now, Billy Mink sat on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool kicking his heels.

“I can run fast, swim fast, climb fast. I can dive deep. I can jump. I can dig. I can follow a track with my nose and I can see in the dark,” thought Billy Mink. The more he thought of all he could do the better he felt. One by one he thought of the little meadow and forest people whom he knew and what each could do. Think as hard as he would, he could think of no one who could do anything which he couldn’t do.

“There isn’t any one,” said Billy Mink right out loud. Just like that. “There isn’t any one!”

“Chugarum!” said Grandfather Frog.

Billy Mink looked over to the big green my pad where Grandfather Frog was sitting. Grandfather Frog was gazing solemnly up at jolly round Mr. Sun. There wasn’t the teeniest, weeniest bit of a smile about Grandfather Frog’s mouth, and yet Billy Mink somehow felt that way down inside Grandfather Frog was laughing at him.

All at once Billy Mink felt more uncomfortable than ever, and he didn’t feel a bit better when Grandfather Frog turned his back to him and began to sing in a deep voice that seemed to come from the very bottom of his stomach:

“Bragging tongues, so I’ve heard say  
For sure discomfort pave the way.”

“Now, what do you mean by that?” snapped Billy Mink.

Grandfather Frog turned around and seemed very much surprised to see Billy Mink.

“Oh, nothing, nothing, nothing at all! I was just talking to myself,” said he.

Billy Mink looked at him very hard but Grandfather Frog looked as solemn as ever.

“Huh!” said Billy Mink, and slid down into the Smiling Pool. He swam across and started up the Laughing Brook, and as he went he heard Grandfather Frog singing once more. He stopped to listen, and this is what he heard:

“Pride runs on before a fall,  
And doesn’t mind its feet;  
The one who wins a race keeps still  
Till after he has beat.”

“Huh!” said Billy Mink. But just the same he felt more uncomfortable than ever.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #37)*

## STORY 164. August 17, 1912.

### Grandfather Frog Sends out Invitations

Billy Mink had gone off up the Laughing Brook, feeling most uncomfortable. Grandfather Frog had watched him go. When Billy Mink was out of sight Grandfather Frog suddenly smiled to himself. Then he opened his big mouth very wide and laughed and laughed without making a sound.

Pretty soon Grandfather Frog beckoned to the Merry Little Breezes who were playing on the bank. At once they stopped teasing the buttercups and daisies and hurried to gather around Grandfather Frog as he sat on his big green lily pad in the Smiling Pool.

“Chugarum!” said Grandfather Frog. “How would you like a story?” The Merry Little Breezes clapped their hands and danced for joy.

“Ever and ever and ever so much! Oh, ever so much, Grandfather Frog!” they all cried together.

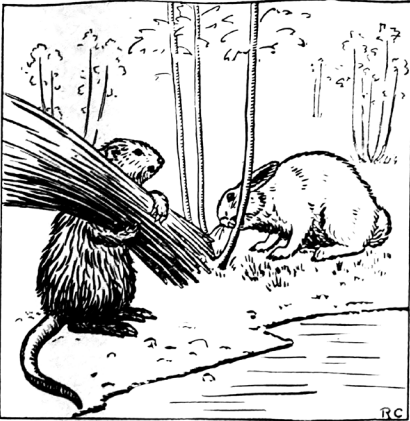
“All right, you shall have it, if—” Grandfather Frog paused and his eyes twinkled.

“If what, Grandfather Frog?” cried one of the Merry Little Breezes anxiously,

“If you will do a favor for me,” replied Grandfather Frog

“Of course we will, Grandfather Frog! Of course we will!” shouted the Merry Little Breezes.

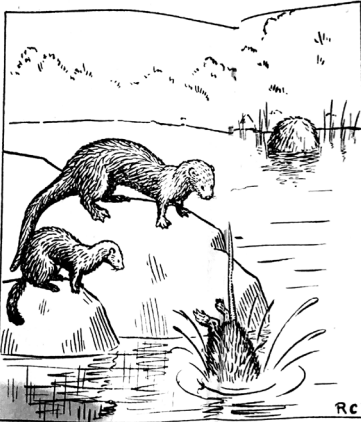
Illustrations. August 12 to August 17, 1912.



159. Everybody Lends Jerry Muskrat a Hand



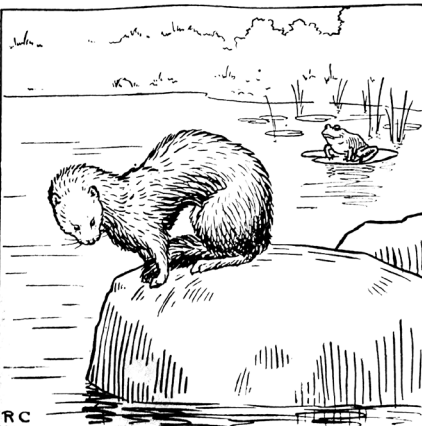
160. Jerry Muskrat's Secret Door



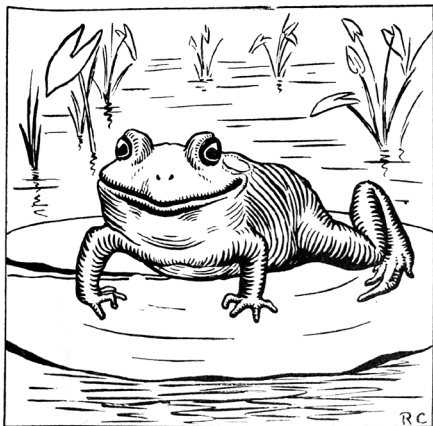
161. Jerry Muskrat Has Another Secret



162. Billy Mink Becomes a Boaster



163. Billy Mink Feels Uncomfortable



164. Grandfather Frog Sends out Invitations



Then Grandfather Frog whispered to the Merry Little Breezes and sent them hurrying over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest.

One found Happy Jack Squirrel. “Grandfather Frog invites you to be at the Big Hickory Tree by the Smiling Pool at sundown tonight, and he says be ready to climb your fastest,” said the Merry Little Breeze.

Happy Jack smiled. “I will be there!” said he.

Another Merry Little Breeze hunted until he found Peter Rabbit. “Grandfather Frog invites you to come to the Smiling Pool at sundown and be ready to show how fast you can run,” said the Merry Little Breeze.

A third Little Breeze invited Johnny Chuck to come and show how he can dig, and a fourth Little Breeze invited Jumper the Hare to come and show how he can jump. The other Merry Little Breezes invited all the rest of the little meadow people and forest folks to be at the Smiling Pool at sundown, and of course everybody agreed to come.

All this time Billy Mink knew nothing of what Grandfather Frog and the Merry Little Breezes were doing. He had boasted that he could do anything that any of the others could do, and Grandfather Frog had said that he could find someone who could do something that Billy Mink couldn’t do, and had called Billy Mink a boaster.

Just now Billy Mink was waiting for sundown, and feeling very uncomfortable as he waited. He would have felt more uncomfortable had he known of Grandfather Frog’s invitations.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar #38)*

## STORY 165. August 19, 1912.

### What Happened at the Smiling Pool

Just as jolly, round, red Mr. Sun went down to his home behind the Purple Hills, Billy Mink came down the Laughing Brook to the Smiling Pool. When he came in sight of the Big Hickory tree on the bank of the Smiling Pool he stopped. What do you think he saw? Why there were all the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest—Johnny Chuck, Happy Jack Squirrel, Striped Chipmunk, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, Reddy Fox, Jimmy Skunk, Bobby Coon, Danny Meadow Mouse. Unc’ Billy Possum, Prickly Porky, Old Mr. Toad, Digger the Badger, Jumper the Hare, Sammy Jay, Blacky the Crow, ol’ Mistah Buzzard. And on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool sat Little Joe Otter, Jerry Muskrat and Spotted Turtle, while on his big, green lily pad, smiling at everyone, sat Grandfather Frog.

They seemed to be waiting for someone and Billy Mink knew that that someone was himself. How he did wish that he hadn’t boasted of what he could do! He would have run back home, but just then ol’ Mistah Buzzard’s sharp eyes saw him.

“Here he comes!” cried ol’ Mistah Buzzard.

So Billy Mink had to go on.

Everybody set up a great shout when he climbed up on the Big Rock and though he felt just a little foolish, he tried not to show it.

Grandfather Frog made a little speech. He told what a wonderful fellow Billy Mink is, or thinks he is, and how he had boasted that he could do anything that anyone else who wears fur can do. Then he invited Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter to show how they could swim.

It was a great race! Yes, indeed, it was a great race! And though Little Joe Otter won, Billy Mink proved that he can swim very fast indeed. Then Peter Rabbit and Billy Mink ran a race, and though Peter was first, Billy Mink almost beat him and proved that he can run very fast indeed. After that Happy Jack Squirrel showed how fast he could climb a tree, but when he reached the very tip top Billy Mink was right at his heels.

Jumper the Hare made some wonderful jumps. Billy Mink jumped, too, of course, he didn't jump nearly so far as Jumper the Hare, whose legs are long and meant for jumping, but he jumped very well indeed. Then Billy Mink proved that he can follow a track with his nose just as well as Reddy Fox. He dug a hole to show that he can dig. Everything that anyone else did, Billy Mink did, and with each success he felt better, for all the little Meadow and Forest People clapped their hands and shouted. "Hurrah for Billy Mink!"

Then Billy Mink looked down at Grandfather Frog and grinned. "Where's that fellow that can do something that I can't do?" demanded Billy Mink. "Where is he? I want to see him." Billy swelled himself up and began to strut back and forth on the Big Rock.

Grandfather Frog looked around at all the Little Forest People, and first winked one big goggly eye and then the other. Just as he did so a funny little squeaky voice, that seemed to come right out of the air, said:

"Here I am, Grandfather Frog."

Everyone but Billy Mink looked up. Billy didn't need to, for as soon as he heard that voice he knew who it is that wears fur that can do something that he cannot do. He had forgotten all about him when he boasted.

Who was it? Why, Flitter the Bat, of course, who, as everyone knows, can fly, while Billy Mink cannot.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar 39)*

## STORY 166. August 20, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit's Foolish Wish

Of course, Billy Mink had felt very foolish when Flitter the Bat had some sailing over the Smiling Pool. Billy wished that he hadn't boasted that he can do anything that anyone else who wore fur can do. When he had made that foolish boast he had not once thought of Flitter the Bat. Of course Grandfather Frog had chuckled and chuckled when

he saw how foolish Billy Mink felt.

Peter Rabbit had laughed and laughed with all the other little meadow and forest people at the look in Billy Mink's face when he first caught sight of Flitter the Bat. Then into Peter's head popped a funny little rhyme.

Doesn't like the sunshine;  
Hangs up by his heels;  
On the edge of darkness  
Flitter darts and wheels.

Peter often had wondered and wondered how it happens that Flitter the Bat is the only one of all the little animals who can really fly. Now as he watched Flitter cutting up monkey shines over the Smiling Pool, Peter Rabbit suddenly gave a great sigh. Everybody heard it and turned to look at Peter.

"Hello, Peter! Do you feel as badly as all that?" asked Bobby Coon.

"No," replied Peter Rabbit. "No, I don't feel badly. I was just wishing—just wishing a foolish wish, that's all."

"You're foolish most of the time, aren't you, Peter?" asked Jimmy Skunk.

Peter Rabbit made a face at Jimmy Skunk, a good-natured face, you understand. "Anyway, I don't spend half my time wishing I could find some beetles and bothering everyone I meet by asking them if they've seen any," replied Peter.

It was Jimmy Skunk's turn to look a little foolish, but he laughed with the others. Then he slapped Peter Rabbit on the back.

"Tell us, Peter, what that foolish wish is?" he cried.

Peter Rabbit smiled. "It's too foolish to tell," said Peter.

"Come on! Out with it!" shouted Johnny Chuck.

"Well, if you must know, I'll tell you," replied Peter Rabbit. "I was wishing that I could fly like Flitter the Bat."

Everybody began to laugh as they tried to picture to themselves how Peter Rabbit with his long ears and long legs would look flying, and Peter laughed too.

Now, Reddy Fox, who is very, very, sly, as you all know, had been watching Peter Rabbit all this time, and gradually creeping nearer and nearer. "Peter will never suspect danger here," thought Reddy Fox, and crept a few steps nearer. While everyone was laughing at Peter Rabbit's foolish wish, Reddy Fox crept up behind a bunch of tall meadow grass just behind Peter Rabbit. Reddy began to lick his lips, for at last he had Peter Rabbit within reach. Just as Reddy prepared to spring, something black passed over his head and close to Peter Rabbit. A funny squeaking little voice cried in Peter's ear, "Jump, Peter Rabbit! Jump!"

Peter jumped. He didn't wait to ask why. He did what he was told to do without waiting, and as he jumped Reddy Fox landed right where Peter Rabbit had been sitting.

Then Reddy Fox started after Peter Rabbit, but somehow everyone seemed to get in his way. He bumped into Bobby Coon. He had to jump over Jimmy Skunk. He was tripped up by Digger the Badger.

Meanwhile Peter Rabbit had safely reached the dear old brier patch.

Who had told Peter to jump? Why Flitter the Bat, of course.

*(Bedtime Story Calendar # 40)*

## STORY 167. August 21, 1912.

### How it Happens that Flitter the Bat Can Fly

The Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind did not let Grandfather Frog forget that he had promised to tell them a story. One afternoon when they had grown tired of romping on the Green Meadows, they danced over to the Smiling Pool and settled around the big, green lily-pad on which Grandfather Frog was dozing. All together they shouted:

“We know you’re old;  
We know you’re wise;  
And what you say  
We dearly prize.  
So tell a tale  
Of olden days,  
And then, mayhap,  
We’ll go our ways.”

“Chug-a-rum! What shall it be about?” demanded Grandfather Frog.

“Tell us why Flitter the Bat can fly when none of the other animals can,” cried one of the Merry Little Breezes.

Grandfather Frog cleared his throat several times, and then he began, and this is the story he told:

“Once upon a time when the world was young, old Mr. Bat, the many times great-grandfather of Flitter, whom you all know, lived in a cave on the edge of the Green Forest. Old Mr. Bat was little, quite as little as Flitter is now. He didn’t have any wings then. No, sir, old Mr. Bat had no wings.

“Now old Mr. Bat’s teeth were small and not made for cracking hard seeds and things of that sort, so he lived mostly on insects. He used to hunt for them under sticks and stones. Sometimes he had hard work to find enough for a meal, because, you know, so many other Green Forest people were hunting for them too.

“Now old Mr. Bat’s eyes were very small, very, very small indeed. They were so tiny that the bright sun hurt them. So old Mr. Bat used to stay in his cave all day and hunt for his meals only after jolly Mr. Sun had gone to bed behind the Purple Hills.

When he did come out most of the crawling bugs had gone to bed<sup>49</sup>, and it was hard work finding them. So often Mr. Bat went hungry.

“One night old Mr. Bat noticed that at twilight a great many bugs fly about. He sat on a big stone at the mouth of his cave and watched. It seemed to him that the air was full of bugs. By and by a big fat fellow came so near that old Mr. Bat forgot where he was and jumped for him—jumped right off the top of the big stone! Of course he got a hard tumble, but he didn’t mind it a bit, not a bit, for he had caught the bug. After that, old Mr. Bat used to spend most of the time he was awake jumping for bugs.

“One night he made a very long jump from a very high stone and got such a fall that all the breath was knocked out of his funny little body. When he had gotten his breath back he discovered that someone was looking down and smiling at him. It was Old Mother Nature.

“‘Pretty hard work to get a dinner that way, isn’t it, Mr. Bat?’ asked Old Mother Nature.

“Mr. Bat allowed that it was.

“‘How would you like to fly!’ asked Old Mother Nature.

“Mr. Bat allowed that that would be very fine indeed, but was quite out of the question because, as you know, he hadn’t any wings.

“Old Mother Nature said no more, but something seemed to be tickling her greatly as she left Mr. Bat. The next evening when old Mr. Bat awoke, he really didn’t know whether he was himself or not. His legs were much longer than they used to be, and really of no use at all for walking. Between them was a queer thin skin. He couldn’t run. He couldn’t even crawl very well.

“At last, after much work, he managed to get to the top of a big rock. He was very hungry, and when a big, fat bug came along, he forgot all about his troubles and tried to jump. But instead of jumping as he always had, he just tumbled off the big rock. As he fell, he spread out his legs. What do you think happened? Why, old Mr. Bat found that he could fly!

“And ever since that long ago time the Bats have lived in dark caves and have been able to fly,” concluded Grandfather Frog.

(Significantly expanded in *Mother West Wind’s When Stories*, Chapter 16: “When Old Mr. Bat Got His Wings”)

## STORY 168. August 22, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Grows Bold

Reddy Fox was growing bold. Everybody said so, and what everybody says must be so. Reddy Fox had always been very sly and not bold at all. The truth is Reddy Fox had so many times fooled Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown’s boy that he had

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49 Changed to “had been caught by others” in book version.

begun to think himself very smart indeed. He had really fooled himself. Yes, sir, Reddy Fox had fooled himself. He thought himself so smart that nobody could fool him.

Now, it is a bad habit, a very bad habit, to think too much of oneself. It is one of the worst habits in the world. And Reddy Fox had the habit. Oh, my, yes, Reddy Fox certainly did have the habit! When any one mentioned Bowser the Hound, Reddy would turn up his nose and say:

“Pooh! It’s the easiest thing in the world to fool him.

Whenever Reddy saw Farmer Brown’s boy he would say with the greatest scorn:

“Who’s afraid of him? Not I!”

So as Reddy Fox thought more and more of his own smartness, he grew bolder and bolder. Almost every night he visited Farmer Brown’s hen yard. Farmer Brown set traps all around the yard, but Reddy always found them and kept out of them. It got so that Unc’ Billy Possum and Jimmy Skunk didn’t dare go to the henhouse for eggs any more, for fear that they would get into one of the traps set for Reddy Fox. Of course, they missed those fresh eggs and, of course, they blamed Reddy Fox.

“Never mind,” said Jimmy Skunk, scowling down on the Green Meadows where Reddy Fox was taking a sun bath, “Farmer Brown’s boy will get him yet! I hope he does!”

Jimmy said this a little spitefully and just as if he really meant it.

Now when people think that they are very, very smart, they like to show off. You know it isn’t any fun at all to feel smart unless others can see how smart you are. So Reddy Fox, just to show off, grew very bold, very bold indeed. He actually went up to Farmer Brown’s henyard in broad daylight, and almost under the nose of Bowser the Hound he caught the pet chicken of Farmer Brown’s boy.

‘O! Mistah Buzzard, sailing overhead high up in the blue, blue sky, saw Reddy Fox and shook his bald head as he said:

“Ah see Trouble on the way;  
Yes, Ah do! Yes, Ah do!  
Hope it ain’t a-gwine to stay;  
Yes, Ah do! Yes, Ah do!  
Trouble am a s pry ol’ man,  
Bound to find yo’ if he can;  
If he finds yo’ bound to stick.  
When Ah sees him, Ah runs quick!  
Yes, Ah do! Yes, Ah do!”

But Reddy Fox thought himself so smart that it seemed as if he really were hunting for Ol’ Mr. Trouble. And when he caught the pet chicken of Farmer Brown’s boy, Ol’ Mr. Trouble was right at his heels.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 4)*

STORY 169. August 23, 1912.

## Reddy Fox Grows Careless

When, in broad daylight, almost under the nose of Bowser the Hound, Reddy Fox stole the plump pet chicken of Farmer Brown's boy, he did it because he wanted to show off. He wanted everyone to know how bold he was. He thought himself so smart that he could do just what he pleased and no one could stop him. He liked to strut around through the Green Forest and over the Green Meadows bragging about what he had done and could do.

Now people who boast and brag and who like to show off, are almost sure to come to grief. None of the little meadow and forest people liked Reddy Fox, anyway. Now they were getting so tired of his boasting that they were just aching to see him get into trouble.

Peter Rabbit—happy-go-lucky Peter Rabbit!—shook his head gravely when he heard how Reddy had stolen that pet chicken in broad daylight and was boasting about it to everyone. "Reddy Fox is getting so puffed up that pretty soon he won't be able to see his own feet," said Peter Rabbit.

"Well, what if he can't?" demanded Jimmy Skunk.

Peter Rabbit looked at Jimmy in disgust.

"He comes to grief, however fleet,  
Who doesn't watch his flying feet.

"Jimmy Skunk, if you didn't have that little bag of scent to make everyone afraid of you, you would be a lot more careful where you step. If Reddy Fox doesn't watch out, someday he'll step right into trouble some day."

Jimmy Skunk chuckled. "I wish he would!" said he.

When Farmer Brown's boy heard about the boldness of Reddy Fox, he shut his lips together very close and reached for his gun.

"I can't afford to raise chickens to feed foxes," said he. Then he whistled for Bowser the Hound, and together they started out to hunt for Reddy Fox. Pretty soon Bowser found Reddy's track.

"Bow, wow, wow, wow!" roared Bowser the Hound.

Reddy Fox, taking a nap on the edge of the Green Forest, heard Bowser's big, deep voice. He pricked up his ears. Then he grinned.

"I feel just like a good run today," said Reddy, as he started off along the Crooked Little Path down the hill.

It was a beautiful summer day, and Reddy knew that in summer men and boys seldom hunt foxes. So Reddy thought that only Bowser the Hound was after him and that all he had to do was run until he got tired and then trick Bowser the Hound so that

he would lose Reddy's track. So Reddy didn't use his eyes as he should have done. You see, he had grown so smart feeling that he had grown careless.

Yes, sir, Reddy Fox had grown careless. Instead watching where he was going and that no other danger was near, he kept looking back to see what Bowser the Hound was doing.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard, sailing 'way, 'way up in the blue sky, could see everything going on below. He saw Reddy having a beautiful time as he tried to fool Bowser the Hound. He saw something else, too, did Ol' Mistah Buzzard. It looked to his sharp eyes very much like a gun sticking out from behind an old tree trunk just ahead of Reddy Fox. And still Reddy kept right on looking behind him instead of in front, he had grown so careless.

"Ah reckon it's just like Ah said; Reddy Fox is gwine to meet up with trouble right smart soon," muttered Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

(Significantly revised for *The Adventures of Reddy Fox*, Chapter 5, "Reddy Grows Careless")

## STORY 170. August 24, 1912.

### Drummer the Woodpecker Drums in Vain

Ol' Mistah Buzzard, looking down from the blue, blue sky, where he was sailing 'round and 'round, could see Reddy Fox running away from Bowser the Hound. He could see, too, that Reddy Fox was growing more and more careless. Instead of minding where he was going he kept turning around to laugh at Bowser the Hound.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard had shaken his bald head and said to himself that Reddy Fox surely would get into trouble right smart soon. You see Ol' Mistah Buzzard could look right down and see that trouble waiting for Reddy Fox. It was waiting behind an old tree trunk, and it looked to Ol' Mistah Buzzard very like a gun.

But Reddy Fox didn't know anything about this. Once upon a time, before he had grown to think himself so very, very smart, Reddy would have been watching out, and would have been very suspicious of that old tree trunk. But now all Reddy could think of was what a splendid chance he had to show all the little meadow and forest people how very bold and smart he was.

So Reddy sat down and waited until Bowser the Hound was almost up to him. Just then Drummer the Woodpecker began to make a tremendous noise—rat-a-tat-tat-tat, rat-a-tat-tat-tat, rat-a-tat-tat-tat!

Now everyone who heard that rat-a-tat-tat-tat knew that it was a danger signal. Drummer the Woodpecker doesn't drum that way for fun. But Reddy Fox didn't pay attention to it. His foolish head was so full of his own smartness that it had no room for anything else.

"Stupid thing!" grumbled Drummer the Woodpecker to himself. "I don't know



Illustrations. August 19 to August 24, 1912.



165. What Happened at the Smiling Pool



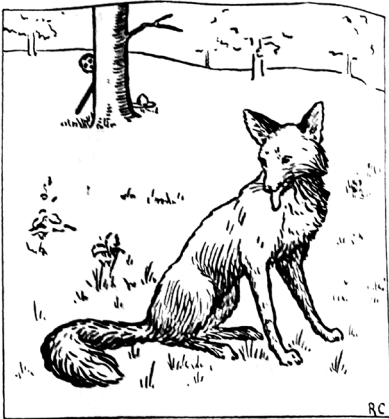
166. Peter Rabbit's Foolish Wish



167. How It Happens that Flitter the Bat Can Fly



168. Reddy Fox Grows Bold



169. Reddy Fox Grows Careless



170. Drummer the Woodpecker Drums in Vain

what I am trying to warn him for anyway. The Green Meadows and the Green Forest would be better off without Reddy Fox anyway. Nobody likes him. He is all the time trying to catch or scare to death those who are smaller than he. Still, he is so handsome!”

Drummer the Woodpecker cocked his head on one side and looked over at Reddy Fox, who was laughing as he watched Bowser the Hound working so hard to untangle his trail.

“Yes, sir! Reddy Fox certainly is handsome!” said Drummer once more. Then he looked down to the root of the old tree trunk on which he was sitting, and what he saw there caused Drummer to make up his mind.

“I surely would miss seeing that handsome red coat of Reddy Fox. I surely would. If he doesn’t hear me now and take heed it won’t be my fault,” said Drummer, and then began such a furious drumming on the old tree trunk that it rang through the Green Forest and out over the Green Meadows, almost to the Purple Hills.

Down at the foot of the old tree trunk a freckle-faced boy looked up and scowled.

“What ails that pesky woodpecker? If he don’t keep still he’ll scare that fox,” muttered the freckled-faced boy, and shook a fist at Drummer the Woodpecker

It was Farmer Brown’s boy.

(Significantly revised for *The Adventures of Reddy Fox*, Chapter 6)

## STORY 171. August 26, 1912.

### Too Late, Reddy Fox Hears

Drummer the Woodpecker was pounding out his danger signal so fast and so hard that his red head<sup>50</sup> flew back and forth almost too fast to see. Rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat, beat Drummer on the old tree trunk on the edge of the Green Forest. When he stopped for breath, he looked down into the scowling face of Farmer Brown’s boy, who was hiding behind the old tree trunk.

Drummer didn’t like the looks of that scowl, not a bit. And he didn’t like the looks of the gun which Farmer Brown’s boy had. He knew that Farmer Brown’s boy was hiding there to shoot Reddy Fox, but Drummer was beginning to be afraid that Farmer Brown’s boy might guess what all that drumming meant—that it was a warning to Reddy Fox. And if Farmer Brown’s boy did guess that, why—why—anyway, on the other side of the tree there was a better place to drum. So Drummer the Woodpecker crept around to the other side of the tree and in a minute was drumming harder than ever. Whenever he stopped for breath, he looked out over the Green Meadows to see if Reddy Fox had heard his warning.

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But if Reddy had heard, he hadn’t heeded. Just to show off before all the little

50 This suggests that Drummer was originally conceived to be a red-headed woodpecker or a pileated woodpecker. He is later identified as a downy woodpecker, males of which do have some red on their heads.

meadow and forest people, Reddy had waited until Bowser the Hound had almost reached him. Then, with a saucy flirt of his tail, Reddy Fox started to show how fast he could run, and that is very fast indeed. It made Bowser the Hound seem very slow, as, with his nose to the ground, he came racing after Reddy, making a tremendous noise with his great voice.

Now Reddy Fox had grown as careless as he had grown bold. Instead of looking sharply ahead, he looked this way and that way to see who was watching and admiring him. So he took no note of where he was going and started straight for the old tree trunk on which Drummer the Woodpecker was pounding out his warning of danger.

Now Reddy Fox has sharp eyes and very quick ears. My, my, indeed he has! But just now Reddy was as deaf as if he had cotton stuffed in his ears. He was chuckling to himself to think how he was going to fool Bowser the Hound and how smart everyone would think him, and then, all of a sudden, he heard the rat-a-tat-tata-tat-tat of Drummer the Woodpecker and knew that that meant “danger.”

For just a wee little second it seemed to Reddy Fox that his heart stopped beating. He couldn't stop running, for he had let Bowser the Hound get too close for that. Reddy's sharp eyes saw Drummer the Woodpecker near the top of the old tree trunk, and that Drummer seemed to be looking at something down below. Reddy Fox gave one quick look at the foot of the old tree trunk and saw a gun pointed at him and behind the gun the freckled face of Farmer Brown's boy. Reddy Fox gave a little gasp of fright and turned so suddenly that he almost fell flat. Then he began to run as never in his life had he run before. It seemed as though his flying feet hardly touched the grass. His eyes were popping out with fright as with every jump he tried to run just a wee bit faster.

Bang! Bang! Two flashes of fire and two puffs of smoke darted from behind the old tree trunk. Drummer the Woodpecker gave a frightened scream and flew deep into the Green Forest. Peter Rabbit flattened himself under a friendly bramble bush. Johnny Chuck dove head first down his doorway.

Reddy Fox gave a yelp, a shrill little yelp of pain, and suddenly began to go lame. But Farmer Brown's boy didn't know that. He thought he had missed, and he growled to himself:

“I'll get that fox yet for stealing my pet chicken!”

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 7, “Too Late Reddy Fox Hears”)*

## STORY 172. August 27, 1912.

### Granny Fox Takes Care of Reddy

Reddy Fox was so sore and lame that he could hardly hobble. You see, he had been shot by Farmer Brown's boy, who had been hiding behind an old tree trunk, waiting for Reddy. Reddy had been dreadfully frightened and so hurt that he had had the hardest kind of work to get far enough ahead of Bowser the Hound to mix his trail up so that Bowser couldn't follow it.

Then Reddy Fox had limped home, big tears running down his nose, although he tried hard not to cry. “Oh! Oh! Oh!” moaned Reddy Fox, as he crept in at the doorway of his home.

“What’s the matter now?” snapped old Granny Fox, who had just waked up from a sound nap.

“I—I’ve got hurt,” said Reddy Fox, and began to cry harder.

Granny Fox looked at Reddy sharply. “What have you been doing now—tearing your clothes on a barbed-wire fence or trying to crawl through a bull-briar thicket? I should think you were big enough by this time to look out for yourself!” said Granny Fox crossly, as she came over to look at Reddy’s hurts.

“Please don’t scold, please don’t, Granny Fox,” begged Reddy, who was beginning to feel sick to his stomach as well as lame, and to smart so dreadfully.

Granny Fox took one look at Reddy’s wounds, and knew right away what had happened. She made Reddy stretch himself out at full length and then she went to work on him, washing his wounds with the greatest care and binding them up<sup>51</sup>. She was very gentle, was old Granny Fox, as she touched the sore places, but all the time she was at work her tongue flew, and that wasn’t gentle at all. Oh, my, no! There was nothing gentle about that!

You see, old Granny Fox is wise and very, very sharp and shrewd. Just as soon as she saw Reddy’s hurts, she knew that they were made by shot from a gun, and that meant that Reddy Fox had been careless or he never, never would have been where he was in danger of being shot.

“I hope this will teach you a lesson!” said Granny Fox. “What are your eyes and your ears and your nose for? To keep you out of just such trouble as this.

“A little Fox must use his eyes  
Or get someday a sad surprise.

A little Fox must use his ears  
And know what makes each sound he hears.

“A little Fox must use his nose  
And try the wind where’er he goes.

“A little Fox must use all three  
To live to grow as old as me.

“Now tell me all about it, Reddy Fox. This is summer and men don’t hunt foxes now. I don’t see how it happens that Farmer Brown’s boy was waiting for you with a gun.”

So Reddy Fox told Granny Fox all about how he had run too near the old tree trunk behind which Farmer Brown’s boy had been hiding, but Reddy didn’t tell how he

51 Anthropomorphism. Not corrected in book version.

had been trying to show off, nor how in broad daylight he had stolen the pet chicken of Farmer Brown's boy. You may be sure he was very careful not to mention that.

And so old Granny Fox puckered up her brows and thought and thought, trying to find some good reason why Farmer Brown's boy should have been hunting in the summertime.

"Caw, caw, caw!" shouted Blacky the Crow.

The face of Granny Fox cleared. "Blacky the Crow has been stealing, and Farmer Brown's boy was out after him when Reddy came along," said Granny Fox, talking out loud to herself.

Reddy Fox grew very red in the face, but he never said a word.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 8)*

## STORY 173. August 28, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Hears the News

Johnny Chuck came running up to the edge of the old brier patch quite out of breath. You see, he is so round and fat and roly-poly that to run makes him puff and blow. Johnny Chuck's eyes danced with excitement as he peered into the old brier patch, trying to see Peter Rabbit.

"Peter! Peter Rabbit! Oh, Peter!" he called. No one answered. Johnny Chuck looked disappointed. It was the middle of the morning, and he had thought that Peter would surely be at home then. He would try once more.

"Oh, you Peter Rabbit!" he shouted in such a high-pitched voice that it was almost a squeal.

"What you want?" asked a sleepy voice from the middle of the old briar patch.

Johnny Chuck's face lighted up. "Come out here, Peter, where I can look at you," cried Johnny.

"Go away, Johnny Chuck! I'm sleepy," said Peter Rabbit, and his voice sounded just a wee bit cross, for Peter had been out all night, a habit which Peter has.

"I've got some news for you, Peter," called Johnny Chuck eagerly.

"How do you know it's news to me?" asked Peter, and Johnny noticed that his voice wasn't quite so cross.

"I'm almost sure it is, for I've just heard it myself, and I've hurried right down here to tell you because I think you'll want to know it," replied Johnny Chuck.

"Pooh!" said Peter Rabbit, "it's probably as old as the hills to me. You folks who go to bed with the sun don't hear the news until it's old. What is it?"

"It's about Reddy Fox," began Johnny Chuck, but Peter Rabbit interrupted him.

“Shucks, Johnny Chuck! You are slow! Why, it was all over Green Meadows last night how Reddy Fox had been shot by Farmer Brown’s boy!” jeered Peter Rabbit. “That’s no news. And here you’ve waked me up to tell me something I knew before you went to bed last night! Serves Reddy Fox right. Hope he’ll be lame for a week,” added Peter Rabbit.

“He can’t walk at all!” cried Johnny Chuck in triumph, sure now that Peter Rabbit hadn’t heard the news.

“What’s that?” demanded Peter, and Johnny Chuck could hear him begin to hop along one of his little private paths in the heart of the old brier patch. He knew now that Peter Rabbit’s curiosity was aroused, and he smiled to himself.

In a few minutes Peter thrust a sleepy-looking face out from the old brier patch and grinned rather sheepishly. “What was that you were saying about Reddy Fox?” he asked again.

“I’ve a good mind not to tell you, Mr. Know-it-all,” exclaimed Johnny Chuck.

“Oh, please, Johnny Chuck,” pleaded Peter Rabbit.

Finally Johnny gave in. “I said that Reddy Fox can’t walk. Aren’t you glad, Peter?”

“How do you know?” asked Peter, for Peter is very suspicious of Reddy Fox, and has to watch out for his tricks all the time.

“Jimmy Skunk told me. He was up by Reddy’s house early this morning and saw Reddy try to walk. He tried and tried and couldn’t. You won’t have to watch out for Reddy Fox for some time, Peter. Serves him right, doesn’t it?”

“Let’s go up and see if it really is true!” said Peter suddenly.

“All right,” said Johnny Chuck, and off they started.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 9)*

## STORY 174. August 29, 1912.

### Poor Reddy Fox

Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck stole up the hill toward the home of Reddy Fox. As they drew near, they crept from one bunch of grass to another and from bush to bush, stopping behind each to look and listen. They had heard that Reddy Fox, who had been shot by Farmer Brown’s boy, was so badly hurt that he could not walk, and now they were going up to his home to see for themselves if it was really so.

But Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck were not taking any chances. Johnny Chuck was not much afraid of Reddy Fox, for he had whipped him once, but he was afraid of old Granny Fox. Peter Rabbit was afraid of both. The nearer he got to the home of Reddy Fox, the more anxious and nervous he grew. You see, Reddy Fox had played so many tricks to try and catch Peter that Peter was not quite sure that this was not another trick. So he kept a sharp watch in every direction, ready to run at the least sign

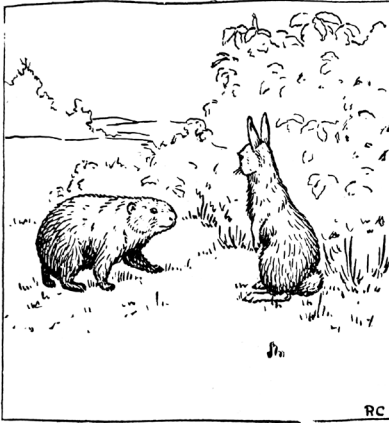
Illustrations. August 26 to August 29, 1912.



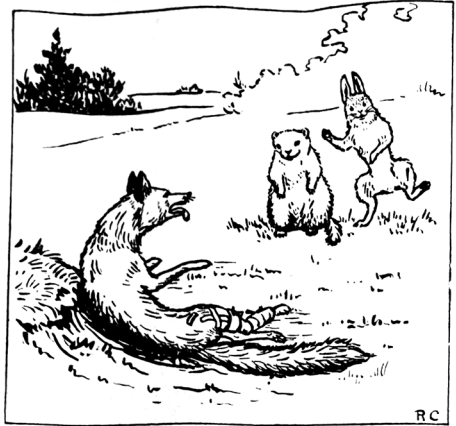
171. Too Late, Reddy Fox Hears



172. Granny Fox Takes Care of Reddy



173. Peter Rabbit Hears the News



174. Poor Reddy Fox

of danger.

When they had tiptoed and crawled to a point where they could see the doorstep of the Fox home, Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck lay down in a clump of bushes and watched. Pretty soon they saw old Granny Fox come out. She sniffed the wind and then she started off at a quick run down the Lone Little Path. Johnny Chuck gave a sigh of relief, for he wasn't afraid of Reddy and now he felt safe. But Peter Rabbit was just as watchful as ever.

"I've got to see Reddy for myself before I'll go a step nearer," he whispered.

Just then Johnny Chuck put a hand on his lips and pointed with the other hand. There was Reddy Fox crawling out of his doorway into the sun. Peter Rabbit leaned forward to see better. Was Reddy Fox really so badly hurt, or was he only pretending?

Reddy Fox crawled painfully out onto his doorstep. He tried to stand and walk, but he couldn't because he was too stiff and sore. So he just crawled. He didn't know that anyone was watching him, and with every movement he made a face. That was because it hurt so.

Peter Rabbit, watching from the clump of bushes, knew then that Reddy was not pretending. He knew that he had nothing, not the least little thing, to fear from Reddy Fox. So Peter gave a whoop of joy and sprang out into view.

Reddy looked up and tried to grin, but made a face of pain instead. You see, it hurt so to move.

"I suppose you're tickled to death to see me like this," he growled to Peter Rabbit.

Now Peter had every reason to be glad, for Reddy Fox had tried his best to catch Peter Rabbit to give to old Granny Fox for her dinner, and time and again Peter had just barely escaped. So at first Peter Rabbit had whooped with joy. But as he saw how very helpless Reddy really was and how much pain he felt, suddenly Peter Rabbit's big, soft eyes filled with tears of pity. He forgot all about the threats of Reddy Fox and how Reddy had tried to trick him. He forgot all about how mean Reddy had been.

"Poor Reddy Fox," said Peter Rabbit. "Poor Reddy Fox."<sup>52</sup>

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 10)*

## STORY 175. September 4, 1912.

### Granny Fox Returns

Up over the hill trotted old Granny Fox. She was on her way home with a tender young chicken for Reddy Fox. Poor Reddy! He had been shot by Farmer Brown's boy and now was so stiff and sore that he could hardly move, and could not walk at all. It was his own fault. Yes sir, it was his own fault, for he had been showing off and he had been careless or he never would have gone so near to the old tree trunk behind which Farmer Brown's boy was hiding.

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52 There was a four day break before the next story.



Old Granny Fox never makes such mistakes as that. Oh, my, no! So now, as she came up over the hill to a place where she could see her home, she laid the chicken down and then she crept behind a little bush and looked all over the Green Meadows to see if the way was clear. She knew that Bowser the Hound was chained up. She had seen Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy hoeing in the cornfield, so she had nothing to fear from them.

Looking over to her doorstep, she saw Reddy Fox lying in the sun, and then she saw something else, something that made her eyes snap and her teeth come together with a snap. It was Peter Rabbit sitting up very straight, not ten feet from Reddy Fox.

"So that's that young scamp of a Peter Rabbit whom Reddy was going to catch for me when I was sick and couldn't! I'll just show Reddy Fox how easily it can be done, and he shall have tender young rabbit with his chicken!" said Granny Fox to herself.

So first she studied and studied every clump of grass and every bush behind which she could creep. She saw that she could get almost to where Peter Rabbit was sitting and never once show herself to him. Then she looked this way and looked that way to make sure that no one was watching her.

No one did she see on the Green Meadows who was looking her way. Then Granny Fox began to crawl from one clump of grass to another and from bush to bush. Sometimes she wriggled along flat on her stomach. Little by little she was drawing nearer and nearer to Peter Rabbit.

Now, with all her smartness old Granny Fox had forgotten one thing. Yes, sir; she had forgotten one thing. Never once had she thought to look up in the sky. And there was Ol' Mistah Buzzard sailing round and round and looking down and seeing all that was going on below.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard is sharp. He knew just what old Granny Fox was planning to do—knew it as well as if he had read her thoughts. His eyes twinkled.

"Ah cert'nly can't allow li'l Peter<sup>53</sup> Rabbit to be hurt, Ah cert'nly can't!" muttered Ol' Mistah Buzzard, and chuckled.

Then he slanted his broad wings downward and without a sound slid down out of the sky till he was right behind Granny Fox.

"Do yo' always crawl home, Granny Fox?" asked Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

Granny Fox was so startled, for she hadn't heard a sound, that she jumped almost out of her skin. Of course Peter Rabbit saw her then, and was off like a shot.

Granny Fox showed all her teeth. "I wish you would mind your own business, Mistah Buzzard!" she snarled.

"Cert'nly, cert'nly, Ah sho'ly will!" replied Ol' Mistah Buzzard, and sailed up into the blue, blue sky.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 11)*

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53 Changed to "Brer" in the book version.

## STORY 176. September 5, 1912.

### The Lost Chicken.

When old Granny Fox had laid down the chicken she was bringing home to Reddy Fox to try to catch Peter Rabbit, she had meant to go right back and get it as soon as she had caught Peter. Then Ol' Mistah Buzzard had dropped down out of the blue, blue sky and startled her so that she had jumped. Of course Peter Rabbit saw her when she jumped, and off he went, lipperty-lipperty-lip, as fast as he could go.

Old Granny Fox was so angry that she hopped up and down. She tore up the grass and ground her long, white teeth. She was smart enough to know that Ol' Mistah Buzzard had taken that way to warn Peter Rabbit but all she could do was to scold Ol' Mistah Buzzard, and that didn't do her much good, for in a few minutes he was so far up in the blue, blue sky that he couldn't hear a word she was saying. My, my, but old Granny Fox certainly was angry! If she hadn't been so angry, she might have seen Johnny Chuck lying as flat as he could make himself behind a big clump of grass.

Johnny Chuck was scared. Yes, indeed, Johnny Chuck was dreadfully scared. He had once fought Reddy Fox and whipped him, but he knew that old Granny Fox would be too much for him. So it was with great relief that Johnny Chuck saw her stop tearing up the grass and trot over to see how Reddy Fox was getting along. Then Johnny Chuck crept along until he was far enough away to run. How he did run! He was so fat and roly-poly that he was all out of breath when he reached home, and so tired that he just dropped down on his doorstep and panted.

“Serves me right for having so much curiosity,” said Johnny Chuck to himself.

Reddy Fox looked up as old Granny Fox came hurrying home. Reddy had been shot by Farmer Brown's boy and he was so stiff and sore that he couldn't walk. He was weak and very, very hungry. But he felt sure that old Granny Fox would bring him something nice for his breakfast, and as soon as he heard her footsteps his mouth began to water.

“Did you bring me something nice, Granny?” asked Reddy Fox.

Now old Granny Fox had been so put out by the scare she had had and by her failure to catch Peter Rabbit that she had forgotten all about the chicken she had left up on the hill.

When Reddy spoke, she remembered it, and the thought of having to go way back after it didn't improve her temper a bit.

“No!” she snapped. “I haven't! You don't deserve any breakfast anyway. If you had any gumption”—that's the word Granny Fox used, gumption—“if you had any gumption at all, you wouldn't have gotten in trouble, and could get your own breakfast.”

Reddy Fox didn't know what gumption meant, but he did know that he was very, very hungry, and do what he would, he couldn't keep back a couple of big tears of

disappointment. Granny Fox saw them.

“There, there, Reddy! Don’t cry. I’ve got a fine fat chicken for you up on the hill, and I’ll run back and get it,” said Granny Fox.

So off she started up the hill to the place where she had left the chicken when she started to try to catch Peter Rabbit. When she got there, there wasn’t any chicken.

No, sir, there was no chicken at all—just a few feathers. Granny Fox could hardly believe her own eyes. She looked this way and she looked that way, but there was no chicken, just a few feathers. Old Granny Fox flew into a greater rage than before.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 12)*

## STORY 177. September 6, 1912.

### Granny Fox calls Jimmy Skunk Names

Granny Fox couldn’t believe her own eyes. No, sir, she couldn’t believe her own eyes, and she rubbed them two or three times to make sure that she was seeing right. She had left a plump chicken on the top of the hill while she tried to catch Peter Rabbit. She had not caught Peter and now the chicken had disappeared, and there was no trace of where it had gone to.

It was very queer. Old Granny Fox sat down to think who would dare steal anything from her. Then she walked in a big circle with her nose to the ground, sniffing and sniffing. What was she doing that for? Why, to see if she could find the tracks of anyone who might have stolen her chicken.

“Aha!” exclaimed old Granny Fox, starting to run along the top of the hill, her nose to the ground. “Aha! I’ll catch him this time!”

In a few minutes she began to run more slowly, and every two or three steps she would look ahead. Suddenly her eyes snapped, and she began to creep almost flat on her stomach, just as she had crept for Peter Rabbit. But it wasn’t Peter Rabbit this time. It was—whom do you think? Jimmy Skunk! Yes, sir, it was Jimmy Skunk. He was slowly ambling along, for Jimmy Skunk never hurries. Every big stick or stone that he could move, he would pull over or look under, for Jimmy Skunk was hunting for beetles.

Old Granny Fox watched him. “He must have a tremendous appetite to be hunting for beetles after eating my chicken!” muttered she. Then she jumped out in front of Jimmy Skunk, her eyes snapping, her teeth showing, and the hair on her back standing on end so as to make her look very fierce. But all the time old Granny Fox took the greatest care not to get too near to Jimmy Skunk.

“Where’s my chicken?” snarled old Granny Fox, and she looked very, very fierce.

Jimmy Skunk looked up as if very much surprised. “Hello, Granny Fox!” he exclaimed. “Have you lost a chicken?”

“You’ve stolen it! You’re a thief, Jimmy Skunk!” snapped Granny Fox.

“Words can never make black white;  
Before you speak be sure you’re right,”

said Jimmy Skunk. “I’m not a thief.”

“You are!” cried Granny working herself into a great rage.

“I’m not!”

“You are!”

All the time Jimmy Skunk was chuckling to himself, and the more he chuckled the angrier grew old Granny Fox. And all the time Jimmy Skunk kept moving toward old Granny Fox and Granny Fox kept backing away, for, like all the other little meadow and forest people, she has very great respect for Jimmy Skunk’s little bag of scent.

Now, backing off that way, she couldn’t see where she was going, and the first thing she knew she had backed into a bramble bush, which tore her skirts and scratched her legs. “Ouch!” cried old Granny Fox.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Jimmy Skunk. “That’s what you get for calling me names.”

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 13)*

## STORY 178. September 7, 1912.

### Granny Fox Finds What Became of the Chicken

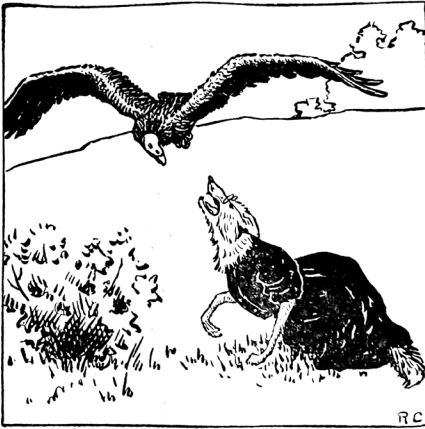
Old Granny Fox was in a terrible temper. Dear, dear, it certainly was a dreadful temper! Jimmy Skunk was laughing at her, and that made it worse. In the first place, she had caught a plump chicken. She had laid this down while she tried to catch Peter Rabbit, but Peter had been warned, and had escaped. Then Granny Fox had gone back for the chicken, only to find that someone had stolen it. She had accused Jimmy Skunk of being the thief. Jimmy had laughed at her, and because Granny Fox has the greatest respect for Jimmy Skunk’s bag of scent, she had kept backing away until she backed right into a bramble bush. It scratched her legs and tore her skirts.

When he saw this, Jimmy Skunk just rolled over and over on the ground and shouted, he was so tickled. Of course, it wasn’t the least bit nice of Jimmy Skunk, but you know that Granny Fox had been calling Jimmy a thief. Then Jimmy doesn’t like Granny Fox anyway, nor do any of the other little meadow and forest people, for most of them are very much afraid of her.

When old Granny Fox finally got out of the bramble bush, she didn’t stop to say anything more to Jimmy Skunk, but hurried away, muttering and grumbling and grinding her teeth. Old Granny Fox wasn’t pleasant to meet just then, and when Bobby Coon saw her coming, he just thought it best to get out of her way, so he climbed a tree.

It wasn’t that Bobby Coon was afraid of old Granny Fox. Bless you, no! Bobby Coon isn’t a bit afraid of her. It was because he had a full stomach and was feeling too good-natured and lazy to quarrel.

Illustrations. September 4 to September 7, 1912.



175. Granny Fox Returns



176. The Lost Chicken



177. Granny Fox Calls Jimmy Skunk Names



178. Granny Fox Finds What Became of the Chicken

“Good morning, Granny Fox. I hope you are feeling well this morning,” said Bobby Coon, as old Granny Fox came trotting under the tree he was sitting in. Granny Fox looked up and glared at him with yellow eyes.

“It isn’t a good morning and I’m not feeling fine!” she snapped.

“My goodness, how you have torn your skirts!” exclaimed Bobby Coon.

Old Granny Fox started to say something unpleasant. Then she changed her mind and instead she sat down and told Bobby Coon all her troubles. As she talked, Bobby Coon kept ducking his head behind a branch of the tree to hide a smile. Finally Granny Fox noticed it.

“What do you keep ducking your head for, Bobby Coon?” she asked suspiciously.

“I’m just looking to see if I can see any feathers from that chicken,” replied Bobby Coon gravely, though his eyes were twinkling with mischief.

“Well, do you?” demanded old Granny Fox.

And just then Bobby Coon did. They were not on the ground, however, but floating in the air. Bobby Coon leaned out to see where they came from, and Granny Fox turned to look, too. What do you think they saw? Why, sitting on a tall, dead tree was Mr. Goshawk, just then swallowing the last of Granny’s chicken.

“Thief! thief! robber! robber!” shrieked old Granny Fox.

But Mr. Goshawk said nothing, just winked at Bobby Coon, puffed out his feathers, and settled himself for a comfortable nap.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 14)*

## STORY 179. September 9, 1912.

### Reddy Fox has a Visitor

Hardly was old Granny Fox out of sight on her way to hunt for the chicken she had left on the hill, when Unc’ Billy Possum came strolling along the Lone Little Path. He was humming to himself, for he had just had a good breakfast. One of the Merry Little Breezes spied him and hurried to meet him and tell him about how Reddy Fox had been shot.

Unc’ Billy listened, and the grin with which he had greeted the Merry Little Breeze grew into a broad smile.

“Are yo’ all sure about that?” he asked.

The Merry Little Breeze was sure. Unc’ Billy Possum stopped for a few minutes and considered.

“Serves that no ‘count Reddy Fox right,” chuckled Unc’ Billy. “He done spoil mah hunting at Farmer Brown’s, he raised such a fuss among the hens up there. ‘Tisn’t safe

to go there any mo'! No, sah, 'tishn't safe, and it won't be safe for a right smart while. Did yo' say that Granny Fox is home?"

The Merry Little Breeze hadn't said anything about Granny Fox, but now remembered that she had gone up the hill.

"Ah believe Ah will just tote mah sympathy over to Reddy Fox," said Unc' Billy Possum, as he started in the direction of where Reddy Fox lived. He made sure that old Granny Fox was not at home before he showed himself.

Reddy Fox lay on his doorstep. He was sick and sore and stiff. Indeed, he was so stiff he couldn't walk at all. And he was weak—weak and hungry, dreadfully hungry. When he heard footsteps, he thought old Granny Fox was bringing him the chicken after which she had gone. He felt too ill even to turn his head.

"Did you get the chicken, granny?" he asked weakly. No one answered. "I say, did you get the chicken, granny?" Reddy's voice sounded a little sharp and cross as he asked this time.

Still there was no reply, and Reddy began to be a little bit suspicious. He turned over and raised his head to look, and instead of old Granny Fox, there was Unc' Billy Possum grinning at him.

Smarty, Smarty is a thief!  
Smarty, Smarty came to grief!  
Tried to show off just for fun  
And ran too near a loaded gun.

"Yo' alls certainly has got just what yo' deserve, and Ah'm glad of it! Ah'm glad of it, Ah say!" said Unc' Billy Possum severely.

An angry light came into the eyes of Reddy Fox and made them an ugly yellow for just a minute. But he felt too bad to quarrel. Unc' Billy Possum saw this. He saw how Reddy was really suffering, and down deep in his heart Unc' Billy was truly sorry for him. But he didn't let Reddy know it. No, indeed, he didn't let Reddy know it. He just pretended to be tickled to death to see Reddy Fox so helpless. He didn't dare stay long, for fear Granny Fox would return. So, after saying a few more things to make Reddy feel uncomfortable, Unc' Billy started off up the Lone Little Path toward the Green Forest.

"Too bad! Too bad!" he muttered to himself. "If ol' Granny Fox isn't smart enough to get Reddy enough to eat, Ah'll have to see what we-alls can do. Ah cert'nly will."

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 15)*

## STORY 180. September 10, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Visits the Smiling Pool

Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink were sitting on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool. Because they had nothing else to do, they were planning mischief. Jerry Muskrat

was busy filling his new house with food for the winter. He was too busy to get into mischief.

Suddenly Billy Mink put a finger on his lips as a warning to Little Joe Otter to keep perfectly still. Billy's sharp eyes had seen something moving over in the bulrushes. Together he and Little Joe Otter watched, ready to dive into the Smiling Pool at the first sign of danger. In a few minutes the rushes parted and a sharp little old face peered out. Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink each sighed with relief, and their eyes began to dance.

"Hi, Unc' Billy Possum!" shouted Billy Mink.

A grin crept over the sharp little old face peering out from the bulrushes.

"Hi, yo'self!" he shouted, for it really was Unc' Billy Possum.

"What are you doing over here?" called Little Joe Otter.

"Just a-looking round," replied Unc' Billy Possum, his eyes twinkling.

"Have you heard about Reddy Fox?" shouted Billy Mink.

"Ah dun jes' come from his home," replied Unc' Billy Possum.

"How is he?" asked Little Joe Otter.

"Po'ly, he sho'ly is po'ly," replied Unc' Billy Possum, shaking his head soberly. Then Unc' Billy told Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter how Reddy Fox was so stiff and sore and sick that he couldn't get anything to eat for himself, and how old Granny Fox had lost a chicken which she had caught for him.

"Serves him right!" exclaimed Billy Mink, who has never forgotten how Reddy Fox fooled him and caught the most fish once upon a time.

Unc' Billy nodded his head. "Yo' are right. Yo' cert'nly are right. Yes, sah, Ah reckons yo' are right. Was yo' ever hungry, Billy Mink—real hungry?" asked Unc' Billy Possum.

Billy Mink thought of the time when he went without his dinner because Mr. Night Heron had gobbled it up, when Billy had left it in a temper. He nodded his head.

"Ah was just a-wondering," continued Unc' Billy Possum, "how it would seem to be right smart powerful hungry and not be able to hunt for anything to eat."

For a few minutes no one said a word. Then Billy Mink stood up and stretched. "Good-bye," said Billy Mink.

"Where are you going so suddenly?" demanded Little Joe Otter.

"I'm going to catch a fish and take it up to Reddy Fox, if you must know!" snapped Billy Mink.

"Good!" cried Little Joe Otter. "You needn't think that you can have all the fun to yourself either, Billy Mink. I'm going with you."



There was a splash in the Smiling Pool, and Unc' Billy Possum was left looking out on nothing but the Smiling Pool and the Big Rock. He smiled to himself as he turned away. "Ah reckon Ah'll sho' have to do my share, too," said he.

And so it happened that when old Granny Fox finally reached home with nothing but a little wood mouse for Reddy, she found him taking a nap, his stomach as full as it could be. And just a little way off were two fish tails and the feathers of a little duck.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 16)*

## STORY 181. September 11, 1912.

### Farmer Brown's Boy is Determined

Farmer Brown's boy had made up his mind. When he shut his teeth with a click and drew his lips together into a thin, straight line, those who knew him knew that Farmer Brown's boy had made up his mind. That is just what he had done now. He was cleaning his gun, and as he worked he was thinking of his pet chicken and of all the other chickens that Reddy Fox had taken.

"I'm going to get that fox if it takes all summer!" exclaimed Farmer Brown's boy. "I ought to have gotten him the other day when I had a shot at him. Next time—well, we'll see, Mr. Fox, what will happen next time!"

Now someone heard Farmer Brown's boy, heard everything he said, though Farmer Brown's boy didn't know it. It was Unc' Billy Possum<sup>54</sup>, who was hiding in the very pile of wood on which Farmer Brown's boy was sitting. Unc' Billy pricked up his ears. He didn't like the tone of voice in which Farmer Brown's boy spoke. He thought of Reddy Fox still so stiff and sore and lame that he could hardly walk, all from the shot which Farmer Brown's boy thought had missed.

"There isn't gwine to be any next time. No, sah, there isn't gwine to be any next time. Ah sho'ly doan love Reddy Fox, but Ah can't nohow let him be shot again. Ah cert'nly can't!" muttered Unc' Billy Possum to himself.

Of course, Farmer Brown's boy didn't hear him. He didn't hear him and he didn't see him when Unc' Billy Possum crept out of the back side of the woodpile and scurried under the henhouse. He was too intent on his plan to catch Reddy Fox.

"I'm just going to hunt over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest until I get that fox!" said Farmer Brown's boy, and as he said it he looked very fierce, as if he really meant it. "I'm not going to have my chickens stolen any more! No, sirs-e-e! That fox has got a home somewhere on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest, and I'm going to find it. Then watch out, Mr. Fox!"

Farmer Brown's boy whistled for Bowser the Hound and started for the Green Forest. Unc' Billy Possum poked his sharp little old face out from under the henhouse and watched them go. Usually Unc' Billy is grinning, but now there wasn't any grin, not the least sign of one. Instead Unc' Billy Possum looked worried.

54      Unc' Billy evidently understands human language.

“There goes that boy with a gun, and nobody knows what’ll happen when it goes off. If he can’t find Reddy Fox, just as likely as not he’ll point it at somebody else just fo’ fun. Ah hope he doan meet up with mah ol’ woman or any of mah li’l’ pickaninnies. Ah’m plumb afraid of a boy with a gun. Ah am. ‘Pears like he don’t have any sense. Ah reckon Ah better be moving along right smart and tell mah family to stay right close in the ol’ hollow tree,” muttered Unc’ Billy Possum, slipping out from his hiding place.

Then Unc’ Billy began to run as fast as he could toward the Green Forest.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 17)*

## STORY 182. September 12, 1912.

### The Hunt for Reddy Fox

Trouble, trouble, trouble, I feel it in the air;  
Trouble, trouble, trouble, it’s round me everywhere.”

Old Granny Fox muttered this over and over, as she kept walking around uneasily and sniffing the air.

“I don’t see any trouble and I don’t feel any trouble in the air. It’s all in the sore places where I was shot,” said Reddy Fox, who was stretched out on the doorstep of their home.

“That’s because you haven’t got any sense. When you do get some and learn to look where you are going, you won’t get shot from behind old tree trunks and you will be able to feel trouble when it is near, without waiting for it to show itself. Now I feel trouble. You go down into the house and stay there!” Granny Fox stopped to test the air with her nose, just as she had been testing it for the last ten minutes.

“I don’t want to go in,” whined Reddy Fox. “It’s nice and warm out here, and I feel a lot better than when I am curled up way down there in the dark.”

Old Granny Fox turned, and her eyes blazed as she looked at Reddy Fox. She didn’t say a word. She didn’t have to. Reddy just crawled into his house, muttering to himself. Granny stuck her head in at the door.

“Don’t you come out until I come back,” she ordered. Then she added: “Farmer Brown’s boy is coming with his gun.”

Reddy Fox shivered when he heard that. He didn’t believe Granny Fox. He thought she was saying that just to scare him and make him stay inside. But he shivered just the same. You see, he knew now what it meant to be shot, for he was still too stiff and sore to run, all because he had gone too near Farmer Brown’s boy and his gun.

But old Granny Fox had not been fooling when she told Reddy Fox that Farmer Brown’s boy was coming with a gun. It was true. He was coming down the Lone Little Path, and ahead of him was trotting Bowser the Hound. How did old Granny Fox know it? She just felt it. She didn’t hear them, she didn’t see them, and she didn’t smell them; she just felt that they were coming. So as soon as she saw that Reddy Fox had obeyed

her, she was off like a little red flash.

“It won’t do to let them find our home,” said Granny to herself, as she disappeared in the Green Forest.

First she hurried to a little point on the hill where she could look down the Lone Little Path. Just as she expected, she saw Farmer Brown’s boy, and ahead of him, sniffing at every bush and all along the Lone Little Path, was Bowser the Hound. Old Granny Fox waited to see no more. She ran as fast as she could in a big circle which brought her out on the Lone Little Path below Farmer Brown’s boy and Bowser the Hound, but where they couldn’t see her, because of a turn in the Lone Little Path. She trotted down the Lone Little Path a very little way and then turned into the woods and hurried back up the hill, where she sat down and waited. In a few minutes she heard Bowser’s great voice. He had smelled her track in the Lone Little Path and was following it. Old Granny Fox grinned. You see, she was planning to lead them far, far away from the home where Reddy Fox was hiding, for it would not do to have them find it.

And Farmer Brown’s boy also grinned, as he heard the voice of Bowser the Hound.

“I’ll hunt that fox until I get him,” he said. You see, he didn’t know anything about old Granny Fox; he thought Bowser was following Reddy Fox.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 18)*

## STORY 183. September 13, 1912.

### Unc’ Billy Possum Gives Warning

“What’s the matter with you, Unc’ Billy? You look as if you had lost your last friend.” It was Jimmy Skunk who spoke.

Unc’ Billy Possum stopped short. He had been hurrying so fast that he hadn’t seen Jimmy Skunk at all.

“Matter enuff, sah! Matter enuff!” said Unc’ Billy Possum, when he could get his breath. “Do you hear that noise?”

“Sure, I hear that noise. That’s only Bowser the Hound chasing old Granny Fox. When she gets tired she’ll lose him,” replied Jimmy Skunk. “What are you worrying about Bowser the Hound for?”

“Bowser the Hound will have to be smarter than he is now before he can worry me, Ah reckon,” said Unc’ Billy Possum scornfully. “It isn’t Bowser the Hound; it’s Farmer Brown’s boy and his gun!” Then Unc’ Billy told Jimmy Skunk how he had been hiding in the woodpile at Farmer Brown’s and had heard Farmer Brown’s boy say that he was going to hunt over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest until he got Reddy Fox.

“What of it?” asked Jimmy Skunk. “If he gets Reddy Fox, so much the better.

Reddy always did make trouble for other people. I don't see what you're worrying about Reddy Fox for. He's big enough to take care of himself."

"Yo' cert'nly are plumb slow in yo' wits this morning, Jimmy Skunk, yo' cert'nly are plumb slow! Supposing yo' should meet up with Farmer Brown's boy with that gun in his hands and supposing he had grown tired of watching fo' Reddy Fox. That gun might go off, Jimmy Skunk; it might go off when it was pointing right straight at yo'!" said Unc' Billy Possum.

Jimmy Skunk looked serious. "That's so, Unc' Billy, that's so!" he said. "Boys with guns do get dreadfully careless, dreadfully careless. They don't seem to think anything about the feelings of those likely to get hurt when the gun goes off. What was you thinking of doing, Unc' Billy?"

"Just passing the word along so everybody in the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest will keep out of the way of Farmer Brown's boy," replied Unc' Billy Possum.

"Good idea, Unc' Billy! I'll help you," said Jimmy Skunk.

So Unc' Billy Possum went one way, and Jimmy Skunk went another way. And everyone they told hurried to tell someone else. Happy Jack Squirrel told Chatterer the Red Squirrel; Chatterer told Striped Chipmunk, and Striped Chipmunk told Danny Meadow Mouse. Danny Meadow Mouse told Johnny Chuck; Johnny Chuck told Peter Rabbit; Peter Rabbit told Jumper the Hare; Jumper the Hare told Prickly Porky; Prickly Porky told Bobby Coon; Bobby Coon told Billy Mink; Billy Mink told Little Joe Otter; Little Joe Otter told Jerry Muskrat, and Jerry Muskrat told Grandfather Frog. And everybody hastened to hide from Farmer Brown's boy and his terrible gun.

By and by Farmer Brown's boy noticed how still it was in the Green Forest. Nowhere did he see or hear a bird. Nowhere could he catch a glimpse of anybody who wore fur.

"That fox must have scared away all the other animals and driven away all the birds. I'll get him! See if I don't!" muttered Farmer Brown's boy, and never once guessed that they were hiding from him.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 19)*

## STORY 184. September 14, 1912.

### Old Granny Fox Makes a Mistake

Old Granny Fox was running through the overgrown old pasture, way up back of Farmer Brown's. She was cross and tired and hot, for it was a very warm day. Behind her came Bowser the Hound, his nose in Granny's tracks, and making a great noise with his big voice. Granny Fox was cross because she was tired. She hadn't done much running lately. She didn't mind running when the weather was cold, but now—"Oh dear, it is hot!" sighed old Granny Fox, as she stopped a minute to rest.

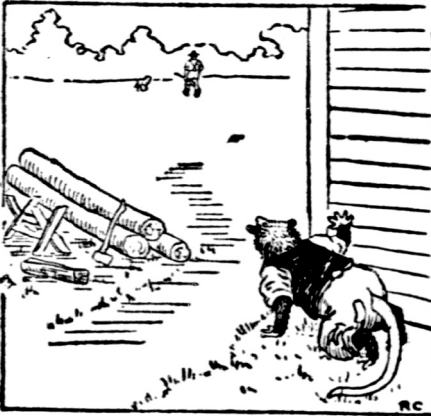
Illustrations. September 9 to September 14, 1912.



179. Reddy Fox Has a Visitor



180. Unc' Billy Possum Visits the Smiling Pool



181. Farmer Brown's Boy is Determined



182. The Hunt for Reddy Fox



183. Unc' Billy Possum Gives Warning



184. Old Granny Fox Makes a Mistake

Now old Granny Fox is very, very smart and very, very wise. She knows all the tricks with which foxes fool those who try to catch them. She knew that she could fool Bowser the Hound and puzzle him so that he wouldn't be able to follow her track at all. But she wasn't ready to do that yet. No, indeed! Old Granny Fox was taking great care to see that her tracks were easy to follow. She wanted Bowser the Hound to follow them, although it made her tired and hot and cross. Why did she? Well, you see, she was trying to lead him, and with him Farmer Brown's boy, far, far away from the home where Reddy Fox was nursing the wounds that he had received when Farmer Brown's boy had shot at him a few days before.

"Bow, wow, wow!" roared Bowser the Hound, following every twist and turn which Granny Fox made, just as she wanted him to.

Back and forth across the old pasture and way up among the rocks on the edge of the mountain Granny Fox led Bowser the Hound. It was a long, long, long way from the Green Meadows and the Green Forest.

Granny Fox had made it a long way purposely. She was willing to be tired herself if she could also tire Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown's boy. She wanted to tire them so that when she finally puzzled and fooled them and left them there, they would be too tired to go back to the Green Meadows.

By and by Granny Fox came to a hole in the ground, an old house that had once belonged to her grandfather. Now this old house had a back door hidden close beside the hollow trunk of a fallen tree. Old Granny Fox just ran through the house, out the back door, through the hollow tree, and then jumped into a little brook where there was hardly more than enough water to wet her feet. Walking in the water, she left no scent in her tracks.

Bowser the Hound came roaring up to the front door of the old house. Granny's tracks led right inside, and Bowser grew so excited that he made a tremendous noise. At last he had found where Granny Fox lived—at least he thought he had. He was sure that she was inside, for there were her fresh tracks going inside and none coming out. Bowser the Hound never once thought of looking for a back door. If he had, he wouldn't have been any the wiser, because, you know, old Granny Fox had slipped away through the hollow tree trunk.

Granny Fox grinned as she listened to the terrible fuss Bowser was making. Then, when she had rested a little, she stole up on the hill where she could look down and see the entrance to the old deserted house. She watched Bowser digging and barking.

After a while a worried look crept into the face of old Granny Fox. "Where's Farmer Brown's boy? I thought surely he would follow Bowser the Hound," she muttered.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 20)*

## STORY 185. September 16, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Disobeys

Old Granny Fox had sent Reddy Fox into the house and told him to stay there until she returned home. Reddy had not wanted to mind, but he knew that Granny Fox meant just what she said, and so he had crawled slowly down the long hall to the bedroom, way underground.

Pretty soon Reddy Fox heard a voice. It was very faint, for you know Reddy was in his bedroom ‘way under ground, but he knew it. He pricked up his ears and listened. It was the voice of Bowser the Hound, and Reddy knew by the sound that Bowser was chasing Granny Fox.

Reddy grinned. He wasn’t at all worried about Granny Fox, not the least little bit. He knew how smart she was and that whenever she wanted to, she could get rid of Bowser the Hound. Then a sudden thought popped into Reddy’s head, and he grew sober.

“Granny did feel trouble coming, just as she said,” he thought.

Then Reddy Fox curled himself up and tried to sleep. He intended to mind and not put his little black nose outside until old Granny Fox returned. But somehow Reddy couldn’t get to sleep. His bedroom was small, and he was so stiff and sore that he could not get comfortable.

He twisted and turned and fidgeted. The more he fidgeted, the more uncomfortable he grew. He thought of the warm sunshine outside and how comfortable he would be, stretched out full length on the doorstep. It would take the soreness out of his legs. Something must have happened to Granny to keep her so long. If she had known that she was going to be gone such a long time, she wouldn’t have told him to stay until she came back, thought Reddy.

By and by Reddy Fox crept a little way up the long, dark hall. He could just see the sunlight on the doorstep. Pretty soon he went a little bit nearer. He wasn’t going to disobey old Granny Fox. Oh, no! No, indeed! She had told him to stay in the house until she returned. She hadn’t said that he couldn’t look out. Reddy crawled a little nearer to the open door and the sunlight.

“Granny Fox is getting old and timid. Just as if my eyes aren’t as sharp as hers! I’d like to see Farmer Brown’s boy get near me when I am really on the watch,” said Reddy Fox to himself. And then he crept a little nearer to the open door.

How bright and warm and pleasant it did look outside! Reddy just knew that he would feel ever and ever so much better if he could stretch out on the doorstep. He could hear Jenny Wren fussing and scolding at someone or something, and he wondered what it could be. He crept just a wee bit nearer.

He could hear Bowser’s voice, but it was so faint that he had to prick up his sharp little ears and listen with all his might to hear it at all.

“Granny’s led them way off on the mountain. Good old Granny!” thought Reddy Fox. Then he crawled right up to the very doorway. He could still hear Jenny Wren scolding and fussing. “What does ail her?”

If it’s hot or if it’s cold,  
Jenny Wren will always scold.  
From morn till night the whole day long  
Her limber tongue is going strong.

“I’m going to find out what it means,” said Reddy, talking to himself.

Reddy Fox poked his head out and—looked straight into the freckled face of Farmer Brown’s boy and the muzzle of that dreadful gun!

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 21)*

## STORY 186. September 17, 1912.

### Ol’ Mistah Buzzard’s Keen Sight

Old Granny Fox had thought that when she fooled Bowser the Hound up in the old pasture on the edge of the mountain she could take her time going home. She was tired and hot, and she had planned to pick out the shadiest paths going back. She had thought that Farmer Brown’s boy would soon join Bowser the Hound, when Bowser made such a fuss about having found the old house into which Granny Fox had run, but out of the back door of which she had slipped without Bowser’s knowing it.

But Farmer Brown’s boy had not yet appeared, and Granny Fox was getting worried. Could it be that he had not followed Bowser the Hound, after all? Granny Fox went out on a high point and looked, but she could see nothing of Farmer Brown’s boy and his gun. Just then Ol’ Mistah Buzzard came sailing down out of the blue, blue sky and settled himself on a tall, dead tree. Now Granny Fox hadn’t forgotten how Ol’ Mistah Buzzard had warned Peter Rabbit just as she was about to pounce on him, but she suddenly thought that Ol’ Mistah Buzzard might be of use to her.

So old Granny Fox smoothed out her skirts and walked over to the foot of the tree where Ol’ Mistah Buzzard sat.

“How do you do today, neighbor Buzzard?” inquired Granny Fox, smiling up at Ol’ Mistah Buzzard.

“Ah’m so as to be up and about, thank yo’,” replied Ol’ Mistah Buzzard, spreading his wings out so that air could blow under them.

“My!” exclaimed old Granny Fox, “what splendid great wings you have, Mistah Buzzard! It must be grand to be able to fly. I suppose you can see a great deal from way up there in the blue, blue sky, Mistah Buzzard.”

Ol’ Mistah Buzzard felt flattered. “Yes,” said he, “Ah can see all that’s going on on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest.”

“Oh, Mistah Buzzard, you don’t really mean that!” exclaimed old Granny Fox, just



as if she wanted to believe it, but couldn't.

"Yes, Ah can!" replied Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

"Really, Mistah Buzzard? Really? Oh, I can't believe that your eyes are so sharp as all that! Now I know where Bowser the Hound is and where Farmer Brown's boy is, but I don't believe you can see them," said Granny Fox.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard never said a word but spread his broad wings and in a few minutes he had sailed up, up, up until he looked like just a tiny speck to old Granny Fox. Now old Granny Fox had not told the truth when she said she knew where Farmer Brown's boy was. She thought she would trick Ol' Mistah Buzzard into telling her.

In a few minutes down came Ol' Mistah Buzzard. "Bowser the Hound is up in the old back pasture," said he.

"Right!" cried old Granny Fox, clapping her hands. "And where is Farmer Brown's boy?"

"Farmer Brown's boy is—" Ol' Mistah Buzzard paused.

"Where? Where?" asked Granny Fox, so eagerly that Ol' Mistah Buzzard looked at her sharply.

"You said you knew, so what's the use of telling you?" said Ol' Mistah Buzzard. Then he added: "But if Ah was yo', Ah cert'nly would get home right smart soon."

"Why? Do, do tell me what you saw, Mistah Buzzard!" begged Granny Fox.

But Ol' Mistah Buzzard wouldn't say another word, so old Granny Fox started for home as fast as she could run.

"Oh dear, I do hope Reddy Fox minded me and stayed in the house," she muttered.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 22)*

## STORY 187. September 18, 1912.

### Granny Fox has a Terrible Scare.

When Ol' Mistah Buzzard refused to tell old Granny Fox where Farmer Brown's boy was, but did advise her to get home as quick as she could, Old Granny Fox felt her heart sink way down to her toes, for she felt sure he had seen Farmer Brown's boy and his gun over near the house where Reddy Fox was nursing the wounds he had received a few days before when he carelessly ran too near Farmer Brown's boy and that dreadful gun.

So old Granny Fox just showed her teeth to Ol' Mistah Buzzard, and then she started for home as fast as she could run, and that, you know, is very fast, indeed. She was already very tired and hot from a long run to lead Bowser the Hound away from the Green Meadows. She had thought to walk home along shady paths and cool off, but now she must run faster than ever, for she must know if Farmer Brown's boy should discover her house.

“It’s lucky I told Reddy Fox to go inside and not come out till I return. It’s very lucky I did that,” thought Granny Fox as she ran. Presently she heard voices singing. They seemed to be in the treetops over her head.

Happily we dance and play  
All the livelong sunny day!

Happily we run and race  
And win or lose with smiling face!

Granny Fox knew the voices, and she looked up. Just as she expected, she saw the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind playing among the leaves. Just then one of them looked down and saw her.

“There’s old Granny Fox! Just see how hot and tired she looks. Let’s go down and cool her off!” shouted the Merry Little Breezes.

In a flash they were all down out of the treetops and dancing around old Granny Fox, cooling her off. Of course, Granny Fox kept right on running. She was too worried not to. But the Merry Little Breezes kept right beside her, and it was not nearly as hard running now as it had been.

“Have you seen Farmer Brown’s boy?” panted Granny Fox.

“Oh, yes! We saw him just a little while ago over near your house, Granny Fox. We pulled his hat off, just to hear him scold,” shouted the Merry Little Breezes, and then they tickled and laughed as if they had had a good time with Farmer Brown’s boy.

But old Granny Fox didn’t laugh—oh, my, no, indeed! Her heart went lower still, and she did her best to run faster. Pretty soon she came out on the top of the hill where she could look, and then it seemed as if her heart came right up in her mouth and stopped beating. Her eyes popped almost out of her head. There was Farmer Brown’s boy standing right in front of the door of her home. And while she was watching, what should Reddy Fox do but stick his head out the door.

Old Granny Fox saw the gun of Farmer Brown’s boy pointed right at Reddy and she clapped both hands over her eyes to shut out the dreadful sight. Then she waited for the bang of the gun. It didn’t come. Then Granny peeped through her fingers<sup>55</sup>. Farmer Brown’s boy was still there, but Reddy Fox had disappeared inside the house.

Granny Fox sighed in relief. It had been a terrible scare—the worst she could remember.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 23)*

## STORY 188. September 19, 1912.

### Granny and Reddy Fox Have to Move

“I don’t want to move,” whined Reddy Fox. “I’m too sore to walk.”

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55 Anthropomorphism.

Old Granny Fox gave him a shove. “You go along and do as I say!” she snapped. “If you had minded me, we wouldn’t have to move. It’s all your own fault. The wonder is that you weren’t killed when you poked your head out right in front of Farmer Brown’s boy. Now that he knows where we live, he will give us no peace. Move along lively now! This is the best home I have ever had, and now I’ve got to leave it. Oh dear! Oh dear!”

Reddy Fox hobbled along up the long hall and out the front door. He was walking on three legs, and at every step he made a face because, you know, it hurt so to walk. Reddy had been shot a few days before by Farmer Brown’s boy, and he was still very stiff and lame and sore.

The little stars, looking down from the sky, saw Reddy Fox limp out the door of the house he had lived in so long, and right behind him came old Granny Fox. Granny sighed and wiped away a tear, as she said good-by to her old home.

Reddy Fox was thinking too much of his own troubles to notice how badly Granny Fox was feeling. Every few steps he had to sit down and rest because it hurt him so to walk.

“I don’t see the use of moving tonight, anyway. It would be a lot easier and pleasanter when the sun is shining. This night air makes me so stiff that I know I never will get over it,” grumbled Reddy Fox.

Old Granny Fox listened to him for a while, and then she lost patience. Yes, Sir, Granny Fox lost patience. She boxed Reddy Fox first on one ear and then on the other. Reddy began to snivel.

“Stop that!” said Granny Fox sharply. “Do you want all the neighbors to know that we have got to move? They’ll find it out soon enough. Now come along without any more fuss. If you don’t, I’ll just go off and leave you to shift for yourself. Then how will you get anything to eat?”

Reddy Fox wiped his eyes on his coat sleeve and hobbled along as best he could. Granny Fox would run a little way ahead to see that the way was safe and then come back for Reddy. Poor Reddy. He did his best not to complain, but it was such hard work. And somehow Reddy Fox didn’t believe that it was at all necessary.

He had been terribly frightened when he had disobeyed Granny Fox that afternoon and put his head out the door, only to look right into the freckled face of Farmer Brown’s boy, but he had ducked back out of sight again too quickly for Farmer Brown’s boy to shoot, and now he couldn’t see why old Granny Fox wanted to move that very night.

“She’s getting old. She’s getting old and timid and fussy,” muttered Reddy Fox, as he hobbled along behind her.

It seemed to Reddy as if they had walked miles and miles. He really thought that they had been walking nearly all night when old Granny Fox stopped in front of the worst-looking old fox house Reddy had ever seen. “Here we are!” said she.

“What! Are we going to live in that thing?” cried Reddy. “It isn’t fit for any respectable fox to put his nose into.”

“It is where I was born!” snapped old Granny Fox. “If you want to keep out of harm’s way, don’t go to putting on airs now.

“Who scorns the simple things of life  
And tilts his nose at all he sees,  
Is almost sure to feel the knife  
Of want cut through his pleasant ease.

“Now don’t let me hear another word from you, but get inside at once!”

Reddy Fox didn’t quite understand all Granny Fox said, but he knew when she was to be obeyed, and so he crawled gingerly through the broken-down doorway.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 24)*

## STORY 189. September 20, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Makes a Discovery

Hardly had jolly, round, red Mr. Sun thrown off his nightcap and come out from his home behind the Purple Hills for his daily climb up in the blue, blue sky, when Farmer Brown’s boy started down the Lone Little Path through the Green Forest.

Peter Rabbit, who had been out all night and was just then on his way home, saw him. Peter stopped and sat up to rub his eyes and look again. He wasn’t quite sure that he had seen aright the first time. But he had. There was Farmer Brown’s boy, sure enough, and at his heels trotted Bowser the Hound.

Peter Rabbit rubbed his eyes once more and wrinkled up his eyebrows. Farmer Brown’s boy certainly had a gun over one shoulder and a spade over the other. Where could he be going down the Lone Little Path with a spade? Farmer Brown’s garden certainly was not in that direction. Peter watched him out of sight and then he hurried down to the Green Meadows to tell Johnny Chuck what he had seen. My, how Peter’s long legs did fly! He was so excited that he had forgotten how sleepy he had felt a few minutes before.

Halfway down to Johnny Chuck’s house, Peter Rabbit almost ran plump into Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk, who had been quarreling and were calling each other names. They stopped when they saw Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit runs away  
From his shadder, so they say.  
Peter, Peter, what a sight!  
Tell us why this sudden fright,”

shouted Bobby Coon.

Peter Rabbit stopped short. Indeed, he stopped so short that he almost turned a somersault. “Say,” he panted, “I’ve just seen Farmer Brown’s boy.”

“You don’t say so!” said Jimmy Skunk, pretending to be very much surprised. “You don’t say so! Why, now I think of it, I believe I’ve seen Farmer Brown’s boy a few times myself.”

Peter Rabbit made a good-natured face at Jimmy Skunk, and then he told all about how he had seen Farmer Brown’s boy with gun and spade and Bowser the Hound going down the Lone Little Path. “You know there isn’t any garden down that way,” he concluded.

Bobby Coon’s face wore a sober look. Yes, Sir, all the fun was gone from Bobby Coon’s face.

“What’s the matter?” asked Jimmy Skunk.

“I was just thinking that Reddy Fox lives over in that direction and he is so stiff that he cannot run,” replied Bobby Coon.

Jimmy Skunk hitched up his trousers and started toward the Lone Little Path. “Come on!” said he. “Let’s follow him and see what he is about.”

Bobby Coon followed at once, but Peter Rabbit said he would hurry over and get Johnny Chuck and then join the others.

All this time Farmer Brown’s boy had been hurrying down the Lone Little Path to the home old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox had moved out of the night before. Of course, he didn’t know that they had moved. He put down his gun, and by the time Jimmy Skunk and Bobby Coon and Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck reached a place where they could peep out and see what was going on, he had dug a great hole.

“Oh!” cried Peter Rabbit, “he’s digging into the house of Reddy Fox, and he’ll catch poor Reddy!”

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 25)*

## STORY 190. September 21, 1912.

### Farmer Brown’s Boy Works for Nothing

The grass around the doorstep of the house where Reddy Fox had always lived was all wet with dew when Farmer Brown’s boy laid his gun down, took off his coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and picked up his spade. It was cool and beautiful there on the edge of the Green Meadows. Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had just begun his long climb up in the blue, blue sky. Mr. Redwing was singing for joy over in the bulrushes on the edge of the Smiling Pool. Yes, it was very beautiful, very beautiful indeed. It didn’t seem as if harm could come to anyone on such a beautiful morning.

But there was Farmer Brown’s boy. He had crawled on his hands and knees without making a sound to get near enough to the home of Reddy Fox to shoot if Reddy was outside. But there was no sign of Reddy, so Farmer Brown’s boy had hopped up, and now he was whistling as he began to dig. His freckled face looked good-natured. It didn’t seem as if he could mean harm to anyone. But there lay the gun,

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185. Reddy Fox Disobeys



186. Ol' Mistah Buzzard's Keen Sight



187. Granny Fox has a Terrible Scare



188. Granny and Reddy Fox Have to Move



189. Peter Rabbit Makes a Discovery



190. Farmer Brown's Boy Works for Nothing

and he was working as if he meant to get to the very bottom of the home of Reddy Fox.

Deeper and deeper grew the hole, and bigger and bigger grew the pile of sand which he threw out. He didn't know that anyone was watching him, except Bowser the Hound. He didn't see Johnny Chuck peeping from behind a tall bunch of meadow grass, nor Peter Rabbit peeping from behind a tree on the edge of the Green Forest, nor Bobby Coon looking from a safe hiding place in the top of that same tree. He didn't see Jimmy Skunk nor Unc' Billy Possum nor Happy Jack Squirrel nor Digger the Badger. He didn't see one of them, but they saw him. They saw every shovelful of sand that he threw, and their hearts went pit-a-pat as they watched, for each one felt sure that something dreadful was going to happen to Reddy Fox.

Only Ol' Mistah Buzzard knew better. From way up high in the blue, blue sky he could look down and see many things. He could see all the little meadow and forest people who were watching Farmer Brown's boy. The harder Farmer Brown's boy worked, the more Ol' Mistah Buzzard chuckled to himself. What was he laughing at? Why, peeping out from behind a an old fence corner he could see the sharp face of old Granny Fox, and she was grinning. Ol' Mistah Buzzard knew by that that Reddy Fox was safe.

But the other little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows didn't know that old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox had moved, and their faces grew longer and longer as they watched Farmer Brown's boy go deeper and deeper into the ground.

"Reddy Fox has worried me almost to death and would eat me if he could catch me, but somehow things wouldn't be quite the same without him around. Oh dear, I don't want him killed," moaned Peter Rabbit.

"Perhaps he isn't home," said Jimmy Skunk.

"Of course he's home; he's so stiff and sore he can hardly walk at all and has to stay home," replied Johnny Chuck. "Hello, what's the matter now?"

Everybody looked. Farmer Brown's boy had climbed out of the hole. He looked tired and cross. He rested for a few minutes, and as he rested, he scowled. Then he began to shovel the sand back into the hole. He had reached the bottom and found no one there.

"Hurrah!" shouted Peter Rabbit and struck his heels together as he jumped up in the air.

*(The Adventures of Reddy Fox, Chapter 26)*

## STORY 191. September 23, 1912.

### Prickly Porky Takes a Sun Bath

Prickly Porky the Porcupine came down from a tall poplar-tree and slowly stretched himself. He was tired of eating. He was tired of swinging in the tree-top.

“I believe I’ll have a sun-bath,” said Prickly Porky, and lazily walked toward the edge of the Green Forest in search of a place where the sun lay warm and bright.

Now Prickly Porky’s stomach was very, very full. He was fat and naturally lazy, so when he came to the doorstep of an old house just on the edge of the Green Forest he sat down to rest. It was sunny and warm there, and the longer he sat the less like moving he felt. He looked about him with his dull eyes and grunted to himself.

“It’s a deserted house. Nobody lives here, and I guess nobody’ll care if I take a nap right here on the doorstep,” said Prickly Porky to himself. “And I don’t care if they do,” he added, for Prickly Porky the Porcupine was afraid of nobody and nothing on the Green Meadows.

So Prickly Porky made himself as comfortable as possible, yawned once or twice, tried to wink at jolly, round, red Mr. Sun, who was winking and smiling down at him and then fell fast asleep right on the doorstep of the old house.

Now the old house had been deserted. No one had lived in it for a long, long time, a very long time indeed. But it happened that, the night before, old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox had had to move out of their nice home on the edge of the Green Meadows because Farmer Brown’s boy had found it. Reddy was very stiff and sore, so that he could hardly walk, and could not go very far. So old Granny Fox had led him to the old deserted house and put him to bed in that.

“No one will think of looking for us here, for everyone knows that no one lives here,” said old Granny Fox, as she made Reddy as comfortable as possible.

As soon as it was daylight, Granny Fox slipped out to watch for Farmer Brown’s boy, for she felt sure that he would come back to the house they had left, and sure enough he did. He brought a spade and dug the house open, and all the time old Granny Fox was watching him from behind a fence corner and laughing to think that she had been smart enough to move in the night.

But Reddy Fox didn’t know anything about this. He was so tired that he slept and slept and slept. It was the middle of the morning when finally he awoke. He yawned and stretched, and when he stretched he groaned because he was so stiff and sore. Then he hobbled up toward the doorway to see if old Granny Fox had left any breakfast outside for him.

It was dark, very dark. Reddy was puzzled. Could it be that he had gotten up before daylight—that he hadn’t slept as long as he thought?

Perhaps he had slept the whole day through, and it was night again. My, how hungry he was!

“I hope Granny has caught a fine, fat chicken for me,” thought Reddy, and his mouth watered.

Just then he ran bump into something.

“Wow!” screamed Reddy Fox, and clapped both hands to his nose. Something was sticking into it. It was one of the sharp little spears that Prickly Porky hides in his coat.



Reddy Fox knew then why the old house was so dark. Prickly Porky was blocking up the doorway.

*(Old Granny Fox, Chapter 27)*

## STORY 192. September 24, 1912.

### Prickly Porky Has Bad Dreams

Reddy Fox had a sore nose and a sore heart. Prickly Porky was taking a sun-nap on Reddy's doorstep and Reddy had run right smack into him when he started out. You see Prickly Porky filled up the doorway and shut out all the light from Reddy Fox. Because there was no light Reddy thought it must still be night. So he crawled up the long hall and very carelessly run right into Prickly Porky. A sharp little spear from Prickly Porky's long coat was sticking in Reddy's nose, and do what he would he couldn't get it out. My, how it did hurt!

Just as soon as he felt it Reddy Fox knew what the trouble was. Prickly Porky had kept Reddy Fox shut up in a hollow log once upon a time and Reddy had not forgotten it. He knew that he had to stay where he was until Prickly Porky got ready to let him out.

"Hi, you, Prickly Porky! I want to come out!" yelled Reddy Fox.

Prickly Porky just snored. Yes, sir, he was so comfortable and warm and sleepy that he went very, very fast asleep and snored. Reddy could hear him. He thought that Prickly Porky was just making believe that he was asleep and Reddy's temper flew all to pieces. My, my, my, it is a dreadful thing to let temper fly to pieces that way!

"Let me out! Let me out! If you don't let me out you'll be sorry!" shrieked Reddy Fox.

Prickly Porky just snored. You see the long hall of the old house in which Reddy had spent the night was narrow and low, so that Reddy's voice did not sound very loud. Reddy did not dare touch Prickly Porky for fear of those little spears hidden in Prickly Porky's long coat. So all he could do was to shout and yell and call Prickly Porky names.

Now, when Prickly Porky sleeps he sleeps very hard, very hard indeed. So he snored away comfortably and knew nothing about Reddy Fox, for you see Prickly Porky had thought the old house deserted when he had stretched himself out on the doorstep for a nap.

By and by Prickly Porky began to dream. He dreamed that someone was yelling in his ears. No matter what he did he couldn't shut out the dreadful noise. By and by it seemed to him that he knew whose voice he heard. It was the terrible voice of Mr. Panther, who lives in the North Woods, from which Prickly Porky had come down to the Green Forest.

Little cold chills ran all over Prickly Porky, for fierce Mr. Panther is one of the

two or three who live in the great North Woods of whom he is afraid. He grunted and whined, and then—why, he opened his eyes and found that it was only a bad dream.

He yawned and stretched, and then pricked up his ears. There was a voice, a really, truly voice, and it was screaming, “Let me out! Let me out!”

Slowly a grin crept over the face of Prickly Porky. Then the grin grew to a chuckle.

“My panther is just Reddy Fox. I think I’ll take another nap,” said he. And he did.

## STORY 193. September 25, 1912.

### Bowser the Hound Turns Back

When Farmer Brown’s boy had dug way down to the very bottom of the house in which Reddy Fox had lived with old Granny Fox and had found no one at home, he thought that Reddy had simply gone out.

You see he didn’t once think that Reddy might have moved. Ol’ Mistah Buzzard, sailing high up in the blue, blue sky, had looked down and grinned as he saw how hard Farmer Brown’s boy was working, and all for nothing.

Now Bowser the Hound had been sniffing around while his master was digging and he had found just a wee, wee trace of Granny and Reddy Fox. It was a good many hours since they had been along there, but there was still just a tiny bit of scent in some of their tracks, just enough to keep Bowser sniffing and sniffing for more. Bowser noticed that it led away from the house, which Farmer Brown’s boy was working so hard to dig open.

“I don’t believe there’s any one at home,” said Bowser to himself. “I’ll just try to follow these tracks and perhaps I will discover something.”

So Bowser the Hound, who is very, very patient, kept sniffing as he ran back and forth this way and that way. Every once in a while he would get such a strong smell of Granny or Reddy Fox that he would open his big mouth and shout “Bow wow” at the top of his lungs. His master was so busy digging that he took no notice at all, and so gradually Bowser’s voice sounded fainter and fainter as he got farther and farther away.

Slowly but surely Bowser the Hound was tracking old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox to the old deserted house which Granny Fox had chosen for a hiding place. Granny was out watching Farmer Brown’s boy dig open her old home and did not pay much attention to Bowser the Hound until she heard an extra loud “Bow-wow” over in the direction of the old house where she had left Reddy asleep. Then her heart fell down, down to her very shoes. She knew what it meant. She knew that Bowser would surely find the old deserted house.

“Oh, dear!” sighed Granny Fox. “I expect I’ve got to lead that dog away over in the old pasture on the edge of the mountain and fool him there again, just as I did yesterday. Oh, dear! It’s dreadfully hot to run. And I haven’t had a mite of breakfast. Oh, dear!”

You remember that Bowser the Hound never looks where he is going when following a track. He just runs with his nose to the ground. So, as usual, he didn't use his eyes this time. So he almost ran right into Prickly Porky the Porcupine, who was taking a sun bath on the doorstep of the old house in which Reddy Fox was hiding.

"Wow!" yelled Bowser, and, putting his tail between his legs, he started back to his master as fast as he could run, for Bowser the Hound is very much afraid of the thousand little spears which Prickly Porky carries in his coat.

## STORY 194. September 26, 1912.

### Prickly Porky Enjoys Himself

Prickly Porky the Porcupine was enjoying himself. There was no doubt about that. He was stretched across the doorway of what had been for a very long time an old deserted fox house, the very house in which old Granny Fox had been born. When he had lain down on the doorstep for a nap and sun bath, he had thought that the old house was still deserted. Then he had fallen asleep, only to be wakened by Reddy Fox, who had been asleep in the old house and who couldn't get out because Prickly Porky was in the way.

Now Prickly Porky does not love Reddy Fox, and the more Reddy begged and scolded and called him names, the more Prickly Porky chuckled. It was such a good joke to think that he had trapped Reddy Fox, and he made up his mind that he would keep Reddy in there a long time just to tease him and make him uncomfortable. You see Prickly Porky remembered how often Reddy Fox played mean tricks on little meadow and forest folks who are smaller and weaker than himself.

"It will do him good. It certainly will do him good," said Prickly Porky, and rattled the thousand little spears hidden in his long coat, for he knew that the very sound of them would make Reddy Fox shiver with fright.

Suddenly Prickly Porky pricked up his funny little short ears. He heard the deep voice of Bowser the Hound, and it was coming nearer and nearer. Prickly Porky chuckled again.

"I guess Mr. Bowser is going to have a surprise; I certainly think he is," said Prickly Porky as he rolled himself into a ball so that all the thousand little spears stood out from his long coat till he looked like a funny great chestnut burr.

Bowser the Hound did have a surprise. He was hunting Reddy Fox, and he almost ran into Prickly Porky before he saw him. The very sight of those thousand little spears sent little cold chills chasing each other down Bowser's backbone, clear to the tip of his tail, for he remembered how he had gotten some of them in his lips and mouth once upon a time, and how it had hurt to have them pulled out. Ever since then he had had the greatest respect for Prickly Porky<sup>56</sup>.

"Wow!" yelled Bowser the Hound, stopping short. "I beg your pardon, Prickly Porky. I beg your pardon, I didn't know you were taking a nap here."

56 Story 46.

All the time Bowser the Hound was backing away as fast as he could. Then he turned around, put his tail between his legs and actually ran away.

Slowly Prickly Porky unrolled, and his little eyes twinkled as he watched Bowser the Hound run away.

“Bowser’s very big and strong;  
His voice is deep; his legs are long;  
His bark scares some almost to death.  
But as for me he wastes his breath;  
I just roll up and shake my spears  
And Bowser is the one who fears.”

So said Prickly Porky, and laughed aloud. Just then he turned to see who was coming. It was old Granny Fox. She had seen Bowser run away, and now she was anxious to find out if Reddy Fox were safe.

“Good morning,” said Granny Fox, taking care not to come too near.

“Good morning,” replied Prickly Porky, hiding a smile with one hand.

“I’m very tired and would like to go inside my house; had you just as soon move?” asked Granny Fox.

“Oh!” exclaimed Prickly Porky, “is this your house? I thought you lived over on the Green Meadows.”

“I did, but I’ve moved. Please let me in,” replied Granny Fox.

“Certainly, certainly. Don’t mind me, Granny Fox. Step right over me,” said Prickly Porky, and smiled once more, and at the same time rattling his spears.

Instead of stepping over him, Granny Fox backed away.

*(Old Granny Fox, Chapter 28)*

## STORY 195. September 27, 1912.

### Granny Fox tells a Wrong Story.

Old Granny Fox was thinking hard, very hard indeed. There lay Prickly Porky the Porcupine taking a sunbath right across the doorway of the old house in which Granny had left Reddy Fox, and Granny wanted to get in to see if Reddy was safe, but she didn’t dare step over Prickly Porky. You see Granny Fox has the greatest respect for Prickly Porky and the thousand little spears hidden in his long coat. She had seen Bowser the Hound, who is afraid of very few things, turn tail and run away from Prickly Porky, and she had no mind to go where Bowser the Hound did not dare to go.

So old Granny Fox sat down at a safe distance and tried to appear as if she was very glad indeed to see Prickly Porky. All the time she was thinking and thinking how she could get Prickly Porky away from the old house. She remembered what a great appetite Prickly Porky has, and how he had rather eat than do anything else.

“I’ve found some splendid poplar trees back in the Green Forest in a place you have never been to,” said Granny Fox.

“You don’t say so!” exclaimed Prickly Porky, pretending to be very much interested.

“Yes I do,” replied Granny Fox, “I know you’ll enjoy the bark and I’ll be very glad to show you where they are.”

“I’m much obliged to you, Granny Fox, but my stomach is full just now and I’m not the least bit hungry, not the tiniest bit.”

The face of old Granny Fox fell, but she tried not to show it. “Don’t you think it is very unsafe to take a nap out here so far from the trees? You know you cannot run fast enough to get away if danger comes this way,” said Granny.

“Pooh!” replied Prickly Porky. “I’m not afraid! Didn’t you see Bowser the Hound run away a few minutes ago?” Prickly Porky rattled his thousand little spears as he spoke, and Granny Fox shivered when she heard them, though she tried not to.

“Of course you’re not afraid of Bowser the Hound,” replied Granny Fox, “but listen: Bowser has gone to get Farmer Brown’s boy, and he has got a gun!”

Prickly Porky sat up and took notice. He had met Farmer Brown’s boy once before and had not been hurt, but he was not sure that Farmer Brown’s boy would be so good natured every time.

“How do you know?” he demanded.

“I saw him, and Farmer Brown’s boy is on his way up here right now,” replied Granny Fox.

Just then a dark shadow swept over them and a voice which seemed to come right out of the sky said:

“Your eyesight is failing yo’, Granny Fox. It certainly is failing yo’. Ah have been watching Farmer Brown’s boy, and he’s on his way home this very minute.”

Old Granny Fox showed all her teeth and shook her fist at Ol’ Mistah Buzzard, who was already climbing up, up, into the blue sky again, while Prickly Porky laughed right out loud and once more stretched himself out comfortably on the doorstep of the old house.

## STORY 196. September 28, 1912.

### Reddy Fox Wishes He Hadn’t Tried to Show Off.

For the first time in his life Reddy Fox was really sorry, really and truly sorry for something that he had done. Usually he didn’t care no matter what mischief he had got into or how uncomfortable he had made other people. But now he was sorry. You see he had plenty of time to think. He was stiff and sore from wounds made when Farmer

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191. Prickly Porcky Takes a Sun Bath



192. Prickly Porcky Has Bad Dreams



193. Bowser the Hound Turns Back



194. Prickly Porcky Enjoys Himself



195. Granny Fox Tells a Wrong Story



196. Reddy Fox Wishes he Hadn't Tried to Show Off

Brown's boy had shot him; he was so hungry that it seemed to him that he could eat almost anything, even grass; he was so weak that he couldn't have run twenty steps to save his life; he couldn't get out of the old house in which he had hidden, and old Granny Fox couldn't get into it to bring him something to eat because Prickly Porky the Porcupine was blocking up the doorway with his thousand little spears. Altogether Reddy was the most miserable little Fox in the whole world.

Now there is nothing like being shut up in the dark to make one think. Reddy had slept all that he could, so, as he lay there in the dark, dusty hall of the old house where Prickly Porky was keeping him a prisoner, something inside began to whisper to him. Reddy Fox tried not to listen. He stopped both ears with his hands, but still he heard that whisper.

"You are getting just what you deserve, Reddy Fox," whispered the voice.

"I don't deserve it!" exclaimed Reddy.

"Oh, yes you do! You deserve all that you are getting and a whole lot more," whispered the voice down inside of him. "If you hadn't tried to be smart and show off you wouldn't have been so foolish as to steal the pet chicken of Farmer Brown's boy in broad daylight. Then Farmer Brown's boy wouldn't have come hunting for you, you wouldn't have been shot, he wouldn't have found your nice, snug house on the Green Meadows, you and Granny Fox wouldn't have had to move in the night to this old, dirty house, and you wouldn't be stiff, sore, weak, hungry, and kept a prisoner right now. It's all because you thought yourself so very, very smart and tried to show off. Now look at the trouble you have brought to yourself and to poor, old Granny Fox."

"I know it," said Reddy Fox right out loud, forgetting that it was only a still, small voice down inside him that he had been listening to.

"What do you know?" asked Prickly Porky, who, just for fun, was keeping Reddy Fox a prisoner.

"It's none of your business!" snapped Reddy.

Reddy could hear Prickly Porky chuckling to himself as he began to sing in a queer, cracked voice:

Rudeness never, never pays  
Nor is there gain in saucy ways.  
It's always best to be polite  
And ne'er give way to ugly spite.  
If that's the way you feel inside  
You'd better all such feelings hide;  
For he must smile who hopes to win  
And he who loses best will grin.

*(Old Granny Fox, Chapter 29 combined with story 206)*

STORY 197. September 30, 1912.

## Dark Days on the Green Meadows

Unc' Billy Possum had been right when he had warned all the little meadow and forest people that hard times were ahead of them if Farmer Brown's boy really meant what he said when he started out to try to get Reddy Fox for stealing his pet chicken. And he had meant it. There was no doubt about that. Every spare minute that he could get he took his gun, called Bowser the Hound, and tramped over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest hunting for Reddy Fox.

It was getting so that no one dared stick his head outside his own door without first looking this way and looking that way to see if Farmer Brown's boy was anywhere in sight. Peter Rabbit was getting so nervous that he jumped if a blade of grass rustled. Old Mrs. Possum worried herself to skin and bones whenever one of her eight babies slipped out to play during the day, and it was hard work to keep an eye on all of them. Johnny Chuck wouldn't go more than ten feet from his own door step, and had eaten all the nearby clover and grass right down to the roots and was beginning to wonder however he could get enough to eat. Danny Meadow Mouse didn't mind so much because he was so very small that he didn't think that Farmer Brown's boy would notice him. Still it made him very uneasy and uncomfortable to know that everybody felt that there was so much danger.

"Just as if it isn't hard enough to keep out of harm's way anyhow! It's getting so that a fellow needs eyes all over him," grumbled Danny. Jimmy Skunk, Bobby Coon, Billy Mink, Little Joe Otter, and Jerry Muskrat didn't mind so much because they prefer to go out at night anyway. Still it was very inconvenient not to be able to take nice sun baths or go visiting in the daytime when they felt like it.

If Farmer Brown's boy just hadn't carried that gun with him it would have been different. To be sure they knew that he was looking for Reddy Fox and not for them. But boys are such careless creatures and guns have such a dreadful way of going off! And right down in his heart each one of the little meadow and forest people had a great fear that should he be seen that dreadful gun would be pointed at him, and Farmer Brown's boy would shoot just for fun, and to see if he could hit.

My, my, those were dark days! Even the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind were unhappy. There was no one to play with. Grandfather Frog himself was uneasy and so grouchy that not a story could they tease from him. As for Reddy Fox, no one would go near him or have anything to do with him any more. At first some had been sorry for him, but now no one pitied him, for everybody knew that this dreadful state of affairs was all his fault. They knew that if he hadn't tried to be smart and show off by stealing the pet chicken of Farmer Brown's boy in broad daylight Farmer Brown's boy never, never would have thought of spending all his spare time on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest with his gun. They were even beginning to wish that Farmer Brown's boy would find Reddy Fox.

"Chugarum!" said Grandfather Frog to his thousand great-grandchildren, the



Tadpoles, “this is what comes from trying to be smart.”

You can’t make trouble for yourself  
And not get other folks in, too,  
For other folks are bound to pay  
For all the wrong that you may do.

## STORY 198. October 1, 1912.

### Billy Mink Calls a Meeting.

Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink sat on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool in the moonlight. For once no thought of mischief was in their little brown heads. Usually, Little Joe Otter is so full of high spirits that he is cutting up all kinds of antics in the water, but now he was very sober and quiet.

“Did you see him yesterday?” asked Billy Mink.

“Yes,” replied Little Joe Otter. “I started to swim over to call on Jerry Muskrat, and who should I see right over there on the bank but Farmer Brown’s boy with his dreadful gun. It made the cold shivers run all over me. Lucky for me I saw him first, and it didn’t take me long to get under water. He didn’t see me at all, so I swam under water all the way over to Jerry Muskrat’s house to warn him not to come out. It is getting to be a dreadful state of affairs. If we couldn’t go fishing at night I don’t know how we ever would get enough to eat. What are we going to do about it?”

Billy Mink scratched his head thoughtfully. “I don’t know,” he said. “Something has got to be done. There isn’t any fun anymore in the Smiling Pool or on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest. Let’s call a meeting of all the little meadow and forest people.”

“The very thing!” cried Little Joe Otter. “Then we can all talk it over.”

So it was arranged that Billy Mink should watch for Old Mother West Wind to come down from her home behind the Purple Hills very early the next morning, and as soon as she had emptied her big bag of all her children, the Merry Little Breezes, he should ask them to hunt up all the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest and invite them to meet at the big hickory tree on the bank of the Smiling Pool just after sunset the next night.

“Be sure that they don’t make a mistake and invite Granny Fox or Reddy Fox,” warned Little Joe Otter.

Billy Mink promised that he would be sure. You see, it was all the fault of Reddy Fox that all this trouble had come about. Farmer Brown’s boy would never never have spent all his spare time with his dreadful gun hunting on the Green Meadows.

The next was a busy day for the Merry Little Breezes, one of the busiest days they had ever spent. You see, it was hard work to find all the little meadow and forest people, for many of them had hidden because of their fear of Farmer Brown’s boy,

so that even the Merry Little Breezes had to hunt and hunt to find them. Every one promised to be there if they could be sure that Farmer Brown's boy, had gone home.

"Oh, dear, however shall we let them know?" cried one of the Merry Little Breezes.

"Ah reckon Ah can let them know," said Ol' Mistah Buzzard, who happened to be listening. "From way up in the blue, blue sky Ah will watch, and when Ah see Farmer Brown's boy go home Ah'll just sail down to the big hickory tree. Everybody can see me up in the sky, and when they see me sailing down at sunset they'll all know that it is safe to come out."

"The very thing!" cried the Merry Little Breezes, clapping their hands for joy. And so it was arranged.

## STORY 199. October 2, 1912.

### The Meeting at the Big Hickory Tree.

Everybody—that is, everybody but old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox—was on hand for Billy Mink's big meeting at the old hickory tree on the bank of the Smiling Pool just after sunset. Some of the littlest folks were a wee bit sleepy, for they usually go to bed when jolly, round, red Mr. Sun puts his nightcap on and goes down before the Purple Hills. They yawned and rubbed their eyes, but they came just the same. You see, it was such an important meeting that they just had to be there.

Billy Mink wore his finest suit of brown, with black trimmings. He sat up on an old log and tried to look very important.

"Friends and neighbors," said Billy Mink, "these are very dark days on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest. Nobody knows what dreadful thing may happen if Farmer Brown's boy keeps tramping over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest with his dreadful gun and Bowser the Hound. Either we shall all have to move away or we must think of some plan to stop Farmer Brown's boy from hunting. You all know whose fault it is—the fault of Reddy Fox."

When he said that everybody groaned, and if Reddy Fox had been there to hear he certainly would have felt very uncomfortable.

"If Reddy Fox had not tried to be smart and show off by stealing the pet chicken of Farmer Brown's boy in broad daylight, Farmer Brown's boy would never have thought of getting out his gun and hunting at this time of the year. Now he isn't hunting for us, and he doesn't mean us any harm, but you all know how thoughtless and careless boys are, and if he should happen to see one of us just as likely as not he would shoot at us just for fun. Now, what are we going to do about it?"

For a few minutes no one said a word. Everyone was thinking, thinking hard. Then Danny Meadow Mouse piped up in a shrill little voice.

"Does anybody know where Reddy Fox is living now since he and Granny Fox

were obliged to move from their old home on the Green Meadows?" asked Danny Meadow Mouse.

Everyone looked at everyone else, and no one spoke. You see old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox had moved in the night very secretly. Finally, Ol' Mistah Buzzard cleared his voice.

"Ah reckon Ah know where they-alls are and so does Prickly Porky," said he.

"Where?" demanded everybody at once.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard shook his head. "Yo 'alls will have to tell me first what yo'alls want to know for," said he.

"Just so; what do you want to know for?" asked Prickly Porky.

"I just thought that if Farmer Brown's boy knew where they are living, he would stop hunting," said Danny Meadow Mouse in a very small voice.

For a long time, not another word was said. Everyone was thinking of the same thing, and it was a very dreadful thought. No one loved Reddy Fox, but no one really wanted to have him shot. And still no one else wanted to be shot, and there was always danger of that so long as Farmer Brown's boy was roaming around with that dreadful gun.

## STORY 200. October 3, 1912.

### It is Decided to Give Reddy Fox Up

All the little meadow and forest people who had come to attend Billy Mink's big meeting at the big hickory tree on the bank of the Smiling Pond were very, very sober. Everyone was there, excepting Reddy Fox and Granny Fox. They had not been invited because it was all on their account that the meeting had been called. Now everyone was thinking and thinking how to stop Farmer Brown's boy from hunting with his gun on the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest. It really wasn't safe to step outside your own door in daylight any more. Right down in his heart each one of the little meadow and forest people was thinking the same thing, but the thought was so dreadful that no one wanted to put it into words. Finally Unc' Billy Possum coughed once or twice, wiped his face with his bandana handkerchief<sup>57</sup>, and then said:

"Mah friends, we-alls is thinking the same thing, Ah reckon, an' no one wants to say what it is. 'Pears like to me that we-alls has got to do something right smart soon or else move away. Ah doan want to go back away down souf, and Ah sho' will have to unless we-alls can stop Farmer Brown's boy from hunting with his dreadful gun. Yo'alls know who he is hunting for. If he could shoot Reddy Fox (everybody shivered when Unc' Billy said this) or find his home or be sure that Reddy had left the Green Meadows and the Green Forest he would stop hunting. It seems to me that we-alls must give Reddy Fox up to save our own skins. What do yo'alls say?"

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"It is a dreadful thing to do, but I think we'll have to do it," said Jimmy Skunk.

57 Anthropomorphism.

“We can’t all be killed just to save Reddy Fox, especially when he brought on all the trouble himself.” said Digger the Badger

“How can we tell Farmer Brown’s boy where Reddy is hiding?” asked Johnny Chuck.

“Ol’ Mistah Buzzard knows where Reddy Fox is hiding. Let him tell Peter Rabbit. Tomorrow when Farmer Brown’s boy comes with Bowser the Hound, Peter can show himself to Bowser and Bowser will chase him. Then Peter can lead Bowser right up to the door of the house in which Reddy Fox is hiding. When Bowser smells Reddy in there he’ll forget all about Peter Rabbit and will make such a fuss that Farmer Brown’s boy will hurry up to find out what the matter is,” said Bobby Coon.

Everyone agreed that this was the only thing to do and that it must be done, that is, everyone but Peter Rabbit agreed.

“I won’t do it!” said Peter Rabbit.

“You’re afraid!” sneered Billy Mink.

“I’m not afraid!” replied Peter Rabbit. “but it is such a mean, such a dreadful thing that I can’t do it.”

“Not after all the tricks of Reddy Fox has tried to catch you? You know well enough that he would gobble you up this very minute if he could catch you,” said Bobby Coon.

“I don’t care! I just can’t do it!” replied Peter Rabbit.

But when they finally made it plain to Peter that the safety of all depended upon his doing it he agreed that he would.

“But I shall never be happy another minute of my whole life,” sobbed Peter Rabbit as he hopped away to the old brier bush.

## STORY 201. October 4, 1912.

### Old Granny Fox is Very Smart

Old Granny Fox had been prowling about just at sunset to try to find something for supper for herself and Reddy Fox. Now, Granny’s eyes are very sharp, her ears are very sharp, and her nose is very sharp, and there are few things that she doesn’t see or hear or smell. So it wasn’t long before old Granny Fox knew that something unusual was going on that evening. Sneaking around through the bushes and grass she saw first one and then another of the little meadow and forest people hurrying along and all were going in the same direction.

“Now, what can be going on,” said Granny Fox to herself. “There must be something that I know nothing about. That will never do! Not at all! Not at all! It is necessary that I should know all that is going on so that I may be better able to watch out for danger and take care of Reddy.”

So walking on tiptoes, almost holding her breath, stealing from shadow to shadow old Granny Fox followed Jimmy Skunk down to the big hickory tree on the bank of the Smiling Pool. Of course she didn't walk right up to the tree herself. My, my no indeed. There were so many sharp eyes and keen ears and noses there that Granny Fox knew that she must be very, very careful if she did not want to be discovered.

First she stretched up her sharp little nose so that what wind there was would blow against the end of it, and she could tell from which direction it was coming. Then she crawled flat on her stomach until she was on that side of the big hickory tree from which the wind was blowing. You see in that way she could smell all the little people gathered there, but they couldn't smell her. Then in the blackest shadow she crawled inch by inch nearer to the big circle of little meadow and forest people who were attending Billy Mink's meeting.

She heard Billy Mink explain why he had called the meeting, and how necessary it was something should be done to stop Farmer Brown's boy from hunting with his dreadful gun. When Billy Mink said that it was all the fault of Reddy Fox that such a dreadful state of affairs had come to pass Granny Fox pricked up her ears a little more. She heard Billy Mink tell how Reddy Fox had tried to be smart and show off by catching the pet chicken of Farmer Brown's boy in broad daylight, and suddenly she understood something that had been puzzling her all these hard days.

"The little scamp!" she muttered to herself. "The little scamp! he wasn't so sore from the wounds where Farmer Brown's boy shot him I'd go straight home and give Reddy the hardest whipping he ever had. He has never told me about that pet chicken, the sly rogue! Now I understand why Farmer Brown's boy hunts us so hard and why he watches his chickens so closely that I haven't been able to steal one for days and days."

All the time she was thinking these things she was listening to what was being said at the meeting. Of course she heard all about the plan to give Reddy Fox up to Farmer Brown's boy and her eyes grew yellow with anger. But right down in her heart she couldn't blame the little meadow and forest people very much.

"It's very lucky, very lucky indeed that I found out about Billy Mink's meeting," muttered old Granny Fox as she hurried back to the old house where Reddy Fox was hiding.

## STORY 202. October 5, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Tries to do his Duty.

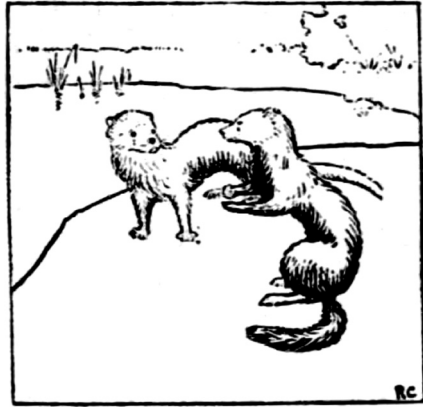
It's duty, duty, duty! Tell me now, I pray you, please,  
Just why it is so seldom that it can be done with ease,  
But almost always seems instead the hardest thing to do?  
I always find it just that way, and so, I guess, do you.

So said Peter Rabbit as he sat in the old brier patch and thought of the duty he had got to perform. Peter knew that it was going to be the hardest thing that he had ever

Illustrations. September 30 to October 5, 1912.



197. Dark Days on the Green Meadows



198. Billy Mink Calls a Meeting



199. The Meeting at the Big Hickory Tree



200. It is Decided to Give Reddy Fox Up



201. Old Granny Fox is Very Smart



202. Peter Rabbit Tries to Do his Duty

done in his life. He didn't want to do it. He wouldn't have promised to do it if there had been any way out of it. If it had been just for himself alone, Peter wouldn't have thought of doing it. But it wasn't just for himself, but for all the little meadow and forest people. So Peter sat in the old brier patch and said over and over to himself:

"I must! I must! I must!"

What was it all about? Why, you see, there had been a meeting of all the little meadow and forest people excepting old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox, to plan some way to stop Farmer Brown's boy from hunting with his dreadful gun on the Green Meadows, and in the Green Forest every day, and because it was all the fault of Reddy Fox, who had stolen the pet chicken of Farmer Brown's boy. It was decided that the only thing to do was to give up Reddy Fox. Then Farmer Brown's boy would stop hunting and the other little people would no longer be in danger from that dreadful gun.

And because there was no one else whom Bowser the hound would chase so readily as Peter Rabbit it was decided that Peter must show himself to Bowser and then lead him up to the old house where Reddy Fox was hiding. Of course, when Bowser once found where Reddy Fox was he would forget all about Peter Rabbit and would make such a fuss that Farmer Brown's boy would hurry up to see what the matter was, and that would probably be an end of Reddy Fox and of the hunting on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest.

Peter Rabbit was thinking of all this as he sat in the old brier patch waiting. He had no love for Reddy Fox, but somehow he couldn't bear to think of being the one to give Reddy up. He looked across the Green Meadows and saw Farmer Brown's boy with Bowser the Hound running ahead of him. Peter sighed, "I've got to do it," he said and slipped out of the old brier patch to show himself to Bowser the Hound.

Bowser saw Peter saucily sitting up in front of him. "Bow-wow!" roared Bowser and started after Peter Rabbit.

Peter Rabbit bravely started out to do his duty. He headed straight for the place where Ol' Mistah Buzzard had told him that Reddy Fox was hiding. The nearer he got the worse he felt. "There's plenty of time," thought Peter. So he darted off to one side and led Bowser the Hound into the Green Forest. But the longer he ran the harder it grew to make up his mind to give Reddy Fox up.

## STORY 203. October 7, 1912.

### What Boomer the Nighthawk Saw

The million little stars looked down and twinkled and twinkled. Beneath them lay the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. They didn't look green now because jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had pulled his nightcap on and gone to his bed behind the Purple Hills, and there wasn't light enough for the grass and the leaves to show their green color.

Over the meadows and along the edge of the forest sailed Boomer the Nighthawk.

Sometimes he was so low that he almost touched the meadow grass. Sometimes he flew in circles way, way high in the sky. Boomer the Nighthawk was happy. He had slept all day, for Boomer likes best to sleep by day and fly by night. The bright light of day hurts his eyes, and he can see better in the starlight than in the daylight. Then at night there are lots and lots of little insects flying about, and very few hungry little people to catch them.

So Boomer the Nighthawk was happy, for there was plenty to eat. Every few minutes he would open his great big mouth and then close it with a snap and every time he did this there was one less insect to fly about and get into a mischief. Really Boomer was helping Farmer Brown, though he didn't know this. You see some of these little insects lived on the green things growing in Farmer Brown's garden, and would soon have killed the little plants growing there. But Boomer the Nighthawk wasn't thinking of this. He was only thinking how good his dinner (this was really his dinner time, you know) tasted, and what splendid fun it was to fly and fly, and not all the time have to be watching out for danger.

By and by he flew away, way up ever so high in the sky. Then he half closed his wings and coasted down, down so fast that it seemed as if he must surely hit the ground. But he didn't. Just before he reached the ground he spread his wings and went skimming over the meadow grass instead. Then he did it all over again. He came down so fast that the air rushed through the long stiff feathers of his wings and made a loud booming sound, which is the reason he is called Boomer. It started some of the little birds out of their sleep in the bushes along the edge of the Green Forest, and this made Boomer chuckle, for he thought it great fun.

Once when he came booming down out of the sky he saw something that made him stop his long slide half way. It was something moving in the blackest shadows where he could look right into them. As he looked he saw two figures creeping slowly along. One of them limped and seemed to be having a dreadful time to get along. "It's Granny and Reddy Fox," said Boomer to himself. They were so intent on their own affairs that they hadn't noticed him at all. He opened his mouth to shout to them. Then he closed it again without making a sound. "I'll just wait and see what mischief they are planning now," he thought.

So from up in the sky Boomer the Nighthawk watched Granny and Reddy Fox cross the Green Meadows and climb the hill towards the far away old pasture.

"I wonder what that means?" said Boomer the Nighthawk to himself.

## STORY 204. October 8, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Hurts a Foot

Peter Rabbit was dodging this way and dodging that way while behind him ran Bowser the Hound, making tremendous noise with his great voice. Of course all the little meadow and forest people heard Bowser, and they knew just what it meant. They knew that Peter Rabbit was doing just as he had said he would do, and was leading



Bowser the Hound to the hiding place of Reddy Fox. “Now we shall have some peace on the Green Forest,” said Johnny Chuck, as he sat on his doorstep and listened to Bowser’s great voice, “I do hope that no harm will come to Peter Rabbit. It would make me dreadfully nervous to know that Bowser was following my tracks like that. I suppose that Peter Rabbit is so used to being chased that he really doesn’t mind,” he added.

To tell the truth, Peter wasn’t so very much worried over Bowser the Hound. He had fooled Bowser so often that he had no fear that he would not be able to fool him again. Then there was the old brier patch into which he could run if Bowser got too near. Bowser never, never could catch him there. What worried Peter was the dreadful duty which had been given him to do by the other little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. He was to lead Bowser the Hound to the hiding place of Reddy Fox, so that Bowser would tell his master and then his master would stop hunting and putting the lives of all little meadow and forest people in danger.

But Peter Rabbit couldn’t bear to think of being the one to give up Reddy Fox, so instead of going right straight away to the hiding place of Reddy Fox, Peter played hide and seek with Bowser among the bushes on the edge of the Green Forest, trying to think of some way to save Reddy Fox. He was thinking so hard that he did not look sharply where he was going. Suddenly sharp pain in his left hind foot made Peter squeal right out. He had stepped on the ugly barb of a piece of wire fence hidden in the long grass.

My, how his foot did hurt! Peter sat down and looked at it. It was bleeding, and he felt as if he just couldn’t step on it. But there was Bowser the Hound! Peter started off on three legs for the old brier patch. It is slow work running on three legs. Bowser the Hound was gaining at every step. Peter wondered if he ever, ever would reach the dear old brier patch. It seemed to him as if Bowser’s deep “Bow-wow!” was right at his heels. Peter gave two more frightened jumps, and there right in front of him was one of his own little secret paths into the old brier patch!

Bowser the Hound didn’t like briars. He stuck his head into the old brier patch and then he pulled it out again and roared angrily. Two or three times Bowser tried it, and each time sly old bramble, a friend of Peter Rabbit, reached out and scratched one of Bowser’s long ears. Each time Bowser yelped. Finally he gave up in disgust, and off he went muttering to himself in deep voice.

Peter Rabbit, nursing his sore foot in the heart of the old brier patch, heard Bowser go away and chuckled. Then he thought of something that made him almost forget the pain in his foot. He wouldn’t be able to show Bowser the Hound where Reddy Fox was hiding! Right down in his heart Peter was glad—he was glad that he had hurt his foot.

STORY 205. October 9, 1912.

## Boomer the Nighthawk Talks with Peter Rabbit

Peter Rabbit sat on the edge of the old brier patch nursing a sore foot. Peter was

happy and he was unhappy. It is hard work to be happy with a sore foot and Peter's foot was very sore indeed. Yet right down deep in his heart Peter was glad of that sore foot. You see, because of it Peter could not show Bowser the Hound where Reddy Fox was hiding. Peter had felt that he had got to do that very thing because all the little meadow and forest people had said that he must, that it was his duty, so that Bowser the Hound would tell Farmer Brown's boy where Reddy was and then Farmer Brown's boy would stop hunting with his dreadful gun on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest.

Peter Rabbit has no love for Reddy Fox. Of course not! But still Peter couldn't bear the thought of being the one to give Reddy up to such a dreadful end as would be his if Farmer Brown's boy caught him. Peter had started out to lead Bowser the Hound up to the old house where Reddy was, but on the way he had hurt his foot on an ugly wire barb and had had hard work to reach the dear old brier patch before Bowser should catch him. Of course then it was quite impossible for him to show Bowser where Reddy was and Peter felt that no one could blame him.

He was thinking of all this as he sat on the edge of the old brier patch and looked up at the twinkling little stars, for it was night. He was wondering what all his little friends and neighbors would say when they learned that he had failed in his duty, and how ever they would get rid of Farmer Brown's boy now.

"Boom!"

Peter jumped so that he forgot all about his sore foot and stepped with it.

"Ouch!" cried Peter. Then he shook one little fist good naturedly up at the sky. "What are you trying to do. Frighten a fellow to death?" he demanded. You see, as soon as he could get his wits together he had known that the noise which had startled him so was made by Boomer the Nighthawk coasting down out of the sky.

Boomer laughed. Then he sailed down close over Peter.

"Why aren't you over in the sweet clover patch this fine night, Peter Rabbit?" asked Boomer.

"I've got a sore foot and I'm afraid that Granny Fox might happen along and catch me there," replied Peter.

"Don't worry about that. Granny Fox is a long way from here and Reddy is with her," said Boomer, cutting up funny antics in the air.

Peter pricked up his long ears. "How do you know that?" he demanded.

"I saw them a little while ago sneaking along in the shadows way up in the old pasture on the edge of the mountain," replied Boomer.

"What!" shouted Peter.

"It's a fact. I was as close as I am to you." said Boomer, swishing by Peter's head so close that Peter ducked.

Then Peter did a funny thing. He tried to dance on three legs. "Hurrah!" shouted

Peter. “That must mean that they have left the Green Meadows and the Green Forest for good!”

## STORY 206. October 10, 1912.

### The New Home in the Old Pasture

The Old Pasture, far away on the edge of the Mountain, is very different from the Green Meadows or the Green Forest. Yes, indeed, it is very, very different. Reddy Fox thought so. And Reddy didn't like the change—not a bit. All about were great big rocks, and around and over them grew bushes and young trees and bull-briars with long ugly thorns, and blackberry and raspberry canes that seemed to have a million little hooked hands, reaching to catch in and tear his red coat and to scratch his face and hands. There were little open places where wild-eyed young cattle fed on the short grass. They had made many little paths all crisscross among the bushes, and when you tried to follow one of these paths you never could tell where you were coming out at all.

No, Reddy Fox did not like the Old Pasture at all. There was no long, soft green grass to lie down in. And it was lonesome up there. He missed the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. There was no one to bully and tease. And it was such a long, long way from Farmer Brown's henyard that old Granny Fox wouldn't even try to bring him a chicken.

At least, that's what she told Reddy. The truth is, wise old Granny Fox knew that the very best thing she could do was to stay away from Farmer Brown's for a long time. She knew that Reddy couldn't go down there, because he was still too lame and sore to travel such a long way, and she hoped that by the time Reddy was well enough to go, he would have learned better than to do such a foolish thing as to try to show off by stealing a chicken in broad daylight, as he had when he brought all this trouble on them.

Down on the Green Meadows, the home of Granny and Reddy Fox had been on a little knoll, which you know is a little low hill, right where they could sit on their doorstep and look all over the Green Meadows. It had been very, very beautiful down there. They had made lovely little paths through the tall green meadow grass, and the buttercups and daisies had grown close up to their very doorstep.

But up here in the Old Pasture Granny Fox had chosen the thickest clump of bushes and young trees she could find, and in the middle was a great pile of rocks. Way in among these rocks Granny Fox had dug their new house. It was right down under the rocks. Even in the middle of the day jolly, round, red Mr. Sun could hardly find it with a few of his long, bright beams. All the rest of the time it was dark and gloomy there.

No, Reddy Fox didn't like his new home at all, but when he said so old Granny Fox boxed his ears.

“It's your own fault that we've got to live here now,” said she. “It's the only place where we are safe. Farmer Brown's boy never will find this home, and even if he did

he couldn't dig into it as he did into our old home on the Green Meadows. Here we are, and here we've got to stay, all because a foolish little Fox thought himself smarter than anybody else and tried to show off."

Reddy hung his head. "I don't care!" he said, which was very, very foolish, because, you know, he did care a very great deal.

(*Old Granny Fox*, Chapter 29, combined with story 196 "Reddy Fox wishes he hadn't tried to show off")

## STORY 207. October 11, 1912.

### Farmer Brown's Boy Gives Up

Fee, fi, fo, fum, fiddle, dee—  
A blackbird up in a tulip tree!  
The whole day long  
He sang this song:  
Fee, fi, fo, fum, fiddle dee!

As he said this Farmer Brown's boy pointed his gun straight up at Mr. Redwing, who was sitting on the very topmost twig of a tall tree singing for joy because over in their cradle in the bulrushes on the edge of the Smiling Pool he had four little babies. For just a minute Farmer Brown's boy looked along the barrel of his dreadful gun, and then—why, he put the gun down again.

"I could shoot you just as easy as can be, Mr. Blackbird, but I guess I don't want to," said he. "I'd miss that beautiful song of yours, and it wouldn't do me a bit of good just to know that I could hit you, because I know it anyway. All I want is to get that fox who stole my pet chicken, but it looks as if I'll have to keep right on wanting. I've hunted the Green Meadows all over and I've hunted the Green Forest all through, but no Mr. Fox. I've found the house where he used to live, but he wasn't at home when I called, and he hasn't been there since, for every day I have been to see."

"Fee, fi, fo, fum, fiddle dee!" sang Mr. Redwing.

Farmer Brown's boy grinned until all the little freckles on his face seemed to run into one big freckle.

"What do you know about it?" he asked.

"Fee, fi, fo, fum, fiddle dee!" sang Mr. Redwing, just as he had before.

Farmer Brown's boy chuckled. "I believe you could tell me a whole lot if you only would," said he. "Has Mr. Fox left the Green Meadows for good?"

"Fee, fi, fo, fum, fiddle dee!" was all Mr. Redwing had to say.

Farmer Brown's boy hitched up his trousers and looked over the Green Meadows. There was no one in sight excepting Mr. Redwing. You see, all the other little meadow and forest people had become so afraid of Farmer Brown's boy and his dreadful gun that as soon as he appeared they straightway hid. The only reason that Mr. Redwing

hadn't flown away as soon as he saw Farmer Brown's boy was because his heart was so full of happiness that he couldn't believe that any one could possibly want to hurt him.

Presently Farmer Brown's boy whistled to Bowser the Hound, who was running about pretending that he was trying his very hardest to find the tracks of Reddy Fox. "Well, old fellow, can't you find that fox?" asked Farmer Brown's boy.

Bowser the Hound looked up in his master's face and wagged his tail. Then he looked off across the Green Meadows toward the far-away Old Pasture on the edge of the mountain. "Bow, wow, wow!" said he.

Farmer Brown's boy looked over there, too, and a sudden thought came to him. He reached down and patted Bowser's head: "I believe you're right, old fellow," said he. "I believe that fox has left the Green Meadows, and I shouldn't wonder but what he has gone up to the Old Pasture. Someday we'll have a look for him there. Now, I guess we'll give it up on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest, and we'll go home and put the gun away."

"Fe, fi, fo, fum, fiddle dee!" sang Mr. Redwing from the topmost of the tall tree.

## STORY 208. October 12, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Spreads the News

It was great news! Peter Rabbit could hardly sit still in spite of his sore foot. He looked up at the little stars and winked back at them and wondered if they knew, too. And he wished and wished that jolly round red Mr. Sun would hurry up and get out of bed.

Peter was so impatient that it seemed to him that Mr. Sun was lazy and dreadfully slow in getting up that morning, though really he wasn't at all. It was just Peter's impatience that made it seem so.

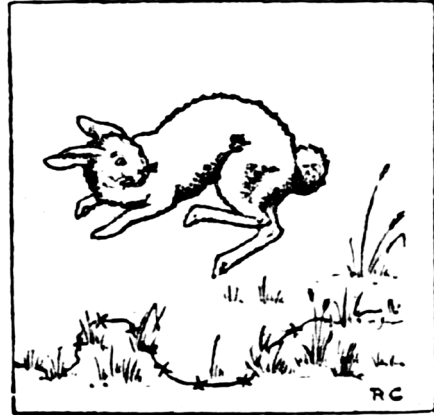
Why was Peter Rabbit so impatient? Why, you see Boomer the Nighthawk had dropped out of the sky late that evening and had stopped to gossip with Peter Rabbit, who, instead of being nicely tucked away in bed like Johnny Chuck and Happy Jack Squirrel, was sitting on the edge of the old brier patch nursing a sore foot and wondering if it was safe for him to go over to the sweet clover patch for something to eat. Boomer had told Peter some news that made Peter forget that he was hungry, and I tell you what. It takes a great deal to make Peter Rabbit forget his stomach. The news was about old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox, and as he listened Peter could hardly sit still.

What was the news? Haven't you guessed? Why, Boomer the Nighthawk had just come from the far away Old Pasture on the edge of the mountain and there he had seen old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox sneaking along in the blackest shadows so that no one would see them. They were going very, very slowly, because Reddy was so sore and lame, where he had been shot by Farmer Brown's boy, that it was all he could do to walk at all. When Peter Rabbit heard that he knew that Granny Fox and Reddy Fox

Illustrations. October 7 to October 12, 1912.



203. What Boomer the Nighthawk Saw



204. Peter Rabbit Hurts a Foot



205. Boomer the Nighthawk Talks with Peter Rabbit



205. The New Home in the Old Pasture



206. Farmer Brown's Boy Gives Up



207. Peter Rabbit Spreads the News

had moved away from the Green Meadows and Green Forest, and that when Farmer Brown's boy found that out he would no longer hunt on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest with his dreadful gun, frightening all the little meadow and forest people so that they did not dare put their heads outside of their own doors. Now Peter was impatient to tell the news, and it did seem as if Mr. Sun never, never would get up.

But he did. Just as he does every morning he pulled his nightcap off, kicked off his rosy blankets and began his daily climb up in the blue, blue sky, He hadn't more than started before Peter Rabbit was on his way to Johnny Chuck's house. Usually when Peter Rabbit is in a hurry he goes very fast indeed, lipperty-lipperty-lipperty-lip, just like that. But this morning Peter had to run on three legs, but it seemed to him as he ran down the Lone Little Path, lipperty-lip-lip, lipperty-lip-lip, just like that, that he never would reach Johnny Chuck's house.

Johnny Chuck was just starting out to look for his breakfast, but he forgot all about it when Peter told him the news.

"Hurrah!" shouted Johnny Chuck and tried to turn a somersault. Then he and Peter hurried over to tell Jimmy Skunk, and the three hastened to tell Striped Chipmunk and Danny Meadow Mouse, and then hurried down to the Smiling Pool to tell Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat and Grandfather Frog.

As fast as they could they spread the news over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest, and just like Johnny Chuck everybody who heard it shouted "Hurrah!"

## STORY 209. October 14, 1912.

### Happy Days on the Green Meadows

Every day Old Mother West Wind opened her big bag and shook out on to the Green Meadows the Merry Little Breezes who, as you know, are her children. Every day for pure joy the Merry Little Breezes whirled about in mad little dances and then scattered in all directions to play the whole day long.

As light our feet as thistle down,  
Our hearts as sunny hours,  
We dance along amid the throng  
And kiss the smiling flowers.

So the Merry Little Breezes sang and kissed the buttercups and daisies and played hide and seek among the tall meadow grasses, for these were happy, happy days on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest. Farmer Brown's boy had put away his dreadful gun and so long as he did not have that, the little meadow and forest people knew that they had nothing to fear from him, unless he should happen to find their homes, and these were so cunningly hidden that he would have to hunt a long, long time to find one of them.

So all the little meadow and forest people were just as happy as the Merry Little

Breezes and were cutting all sorts of pranks on the Green Meadows and around the Smiling Pool.

“My but it does seem good to get enough to eat once more!” exclaimed Johnny Chuck as he rubbed noses with Peter Rabbit in the sweet clover patch, where both ate and ate until it seemed as if their little round tummies would surely burst. You see, in the dreadful days when Farmer Brown’s boy had been tramping over the Green Meadows with his gun, Johnny Chuck had not dared to go more than ten feet from his own doorstep. So Johnny had grown thin, for he hadn’t been able to get enough to eat. Now, he was making up for it. And you know Peter Rabbit always has a tre-men-dous appetite.

Down the Crooked Little Path from the top of the hill came Jimmy Skunk, his hands in his pockets. He was coming very slowly, for it takes something very unusual to make Jimmy Skunk hurry. Peter Rabbit’s eyes twinkled when he saw Jimmy.

“Watch me have me have some fun with Jimmy Skunk,” whispered Peter Rabbit to Johnny Chuck.

Peter limped away, for his foot was still sore, and soon was out of sight in the tall meadow grass. By and by Johnny Chuck caught a glimpse of Peter hiding behind some bushes that grew close to the Crooked Little Path down the hill where it is steepest. Just above was a turn in the Crooked Little Path, and this was the reason that Jimmy Skunk didn’t see Peter, too.

Down came Jimmy Skunk with his hands in his pockets, his pockets, humming to himself. Suddenly a fat beetle ran out of the bushes and started down the Crooked Little Path as if it had very important affairs to attend to. Now if there is anything in the world that will make Jimmy Skunk hurry it is a fat beetle. Jimmy saw this one and his mouth watered. His hands came out of his pockets and he started after the fat beetle without looking to see where he was stepping. Of course he tripped over the blackberry vine that Peter Rabbit was holding across the path. Head first down the hill went Jimmy Skunk, and turned half a dozen somersaults before he reached the bottom!

“Ha, ha, ha!” shouted Peter Rabbit and Johnny Chuck.

Jimmy Skunk picked himself up and grinned. “I’ll get even with you,” he said. Then Peter Rabbit showed him where a dozen fat beetles were hiding under a flat stone.

STORY 210. October 15, 1912.

## Unc’ Billy Possum Grows Excited

Unc’ Billy Possum sat at the foot of the great hollow tree in which his home is. Unc’ Billy felt very fine that morning. He had had a good breakfast, and you know a good breakfast is one of the best things in the world to make one feel fine. Then Unc’ Billy’s worries were at an end, for Farmer Brown’s boy no longer hunted with his dreadful gun through the Green Forest or on the Green Meadows. Then, too, old Granny Fox and Reddy Fox had moved way, way off to the Old Pasture on the edge



of the mountain, and so Unc' Billy felt that his eight little Possums could play about without danger.

So he sat with his back to the great hollow tree, wondering if it wouldn't be perfectly safe for him to slip up to Farmer Brown's hen-house in the dark of the next night for some fresh eggs. He could hear old Mrs. Possum cleaning house and scolding the little Possums who kept climbing up on her back. As he listened, Unc' Billy grinned and began to sing in a queer cracked voice:

“Mah ol' woman am a plain ol' dame,  
‘Deed she am! ‘Deed she am!  
Quick with her broom, with her tongue the same,  
‘Deed she am! ‘Deed she am!  
But she keeps mah house all spick and span;  
She has good vittles fo' her ol' man;  
She spansks the chillun, but she loves ‘em, too;  
She sho' am sharp, but she's good and true  
‘Deed she am! ‘Deed she am!”

“Yo'all better stop yo' lazing and hustle about fo' something fo' dinner,” said old Mrs. Possum, sticking her sharp little face out of the doorway.

“Yas'm, yas'm, Ah was just aiming to do that very thing,” replied Unc' Billy meekly, as he scrambled to his feet.

Just then out tumbled his eight children, making such a racket that Unc' Billy clapped both hands over his ears. “Mah goodness gracious sakes alive!” he exclaimed. One pulled Unc' Billy's tail. Two scrambled up on his back. In two minutes Unc' Billy was down on the ground, rolling and tumbling in the maddest kind of a frolic with his eight children.

Right in the midst of it Unc' Billy sprang to his feet. His eyes were shining, and his funny little ears were pricked up. “Hush, yo'alls!” he commanded. “How do yo'alls think Ah can hear anything with yo'alls making such a racket?” He boxed the ears of one and shook another, and then, when all were still, he stood with his right hand behind his right ear, listening.

“Ah cert'nly thought Ah heard the voice of an ol' friend from way down souf! Ah cert'nly did!” he muttered, and without another word he started off into the Green Forest, more excited than he had been since his family came up from ol' Virginy.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 2)*

## STORY 211. October 16, 1912.

### Unc' Bill<sup>58</sup> Possum's Vain Search

Unc' Billy Possum was excited. Anyone would have known it just to look at him. He hurried off up the Lone Little Path through the Green Forest without even saying

58 This was apparently the title given to newspapers.

good-by to old Mrs. Possum and all the little Possums with whom he had been having a great frolic. They just stared after Unc' Billy and didn't know what to make of it, for such a thing as Unc' Billy forgetting to say good-by had never happened before. Yes, indeed, Unc' Billy certainly was excited.

Old Mrs. Possum sat in the doorway of their home in the great hollow tree and watched Unc' Billy out of sight. Her sharp little eyes seemed to grow sharper as she watched. "Ah done sent that no-account Possum to hunt fo' something fo' dinner, but 'pears to me he's plumb forgot it already," she muttered. "Just look at him with his head up in the air like he thought dinner fo' we-alls would drap right down to him out o' the sky! If he's aiming to find a bird's nest with eggs in it this time o' year, he sho'ly am plumb foolish in his haid. No, sah! That onery Possum has clean fo'gotten what Ah just done tole him, and if we-alls am going to have any dinner, Ah cert'nly have got to flax 'round right smart spry mahself!"

Old Mrs. Possum chased the eight little Possums into the house and warned them not to so much as put their heads outside the door while she was gone. Then she took her market basket<sup>59</sup> and started out to hunt for their dinner, still muttering as she went.

Old Mrs. Possum was quite right. Unc' Billy had forgotten all about that dinner. You see, he had something else on his mind. While he had been playing with his children, he had thought that he heard a voice way off in the distance, and it had sounded very, very much like the voice of an old friend from way down south in "ol' Virginny."

He had listened and listened but didn't hear it again, and yet he was sure he had heard it that once. The very thought that that old friend of his might be somewhere in the Green Forest excited Unc' Billy so that it fairly made him homesick. He just had to go look for him.

So all the rest of that day Unc' Billy walked and walked through the Green Forest, peering up in the tree-tops and looking into the bushes until his neck ached. But nowhere did he catch a glimpse of his old friend. The longer he looked, the more excited he grew.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Jimmy Skunk, meeting Unc' Billy on the Crooked Little Path near the top of the hill.

"Nuffin, nuffin, sah! Ah'm just walking fo' mah health," replied Unc' Billy over his shoulder, as he hurried on. You see he didn't like to tell anyone what he thought he had heard, for fear that it might not be true, and then they would laugh at him.

"Didn't suppose Unc' Billy ever worried about his health," muttered Jimmy Skunk with a puzzled look, as he watched Unc' Billy disappear.

Just as jolly, round, red Mr. Sun dropped out of sight behind the Purple Hills, Unc' Billy gave it up and turned toward home. His neck ached from looking up in the tree-tops, and his feet were sore from walking. And just then Unc' Billy for the first time thought of that dinner that old Mrs. Possum had sent him to get. Unc' Billy sat down

and mopped his brow in dismay.

“Ah ‘spects Ah’m in fo’ it this time, sho’ enough!” he said.

(*The Adventures of Mr. Mocker*, Chapter 3, “Unc’ Billy’s Vain Search”)

## STORY 212. October 17, 1912.

### Unc’ Billy Possum Comes Home

Unc’ Billy Possum crept along in the darkest shadows he could find as he drew near to the great hollow tree which is his home. “Ah ‘spects Ah’m in fo’ it. Ah ‘spects Ah sho’ly am in fo’ it this time,” he kept muttering.

You see old Mrs. Possum had sent Unc’ Billy to find something for dinner, but Unc’ Billy had been so excited because he thought that he had heard the voice of an old friend from way down in ‘ol’ Virginny” that he had forgotten all about that dinner and had spent the whole day hunting through the Green Forest for the friend whose voice he had thought he heard. Now it was dark and Unc’ Billy was disappointed, for he hadn’t found his friend; he was, oh, so tired; he was footsore and hungry. Worst of all, Unc’ Billy dreaded to go home, for he knew just what old Mrs. Possum would say, and you know her tongue is very sharp.

So Unc’ Billy crept along in the black shadows until he got where he could look up and see his own doorway. Then he sat down and watched a while. All was still. There wasn’t a sound in the great hollow tree.

“Perhaps mah ol’ woman am out calling, and Ah can slip in and go to bed before she gets back,” said Unc’ Billy hopefully to himself, as he started to climb the great hollow tree.

But at the first scratch of his toe-nails on the bark the sharp face of old Mrs. Possum appeared in the doorway.

“Good evening, mah dear,” said Unc’ Billy, in the mildest kind of a voice.

Old Mrs. Possum said nothing, but Unc’ Billy felt as if her sharp black eyes were looking right through him. Unc’ Billy grinned a sickly kind of grin as he said:

“Ah hopes yo’alls are feeling good tonight.”

“Where’s that dinner Ah sent yo’ fo’?” demanded old Mrs. Possum sharply.

Unc’ Billy fidgeted uneasily. “Ah done brought yo’ two eggs from Farmer Brown’s hen-house,” he replied meekly.

“Two eggs! Two eggs! How do yo’ think Ah am going to feed eight hungry mouths on two eggs?” snapped old Mrs. Possum.

Unc’ Billy hung his head. He hadn’t a word to say. He just couldn’t tell her that he had spent the whole day tramping through the Green Forest looking for an old friend, whose voice he had thought he heard, when he ought to have been helping her find a dinner for the eight little Possums. No, sir, Unc’ Billy hadn’t a word to say.

My, my, my, how old Mrs. Possum did scold, as she came down the great hollow tree to get the two eggs Unc' Billy had brought. Unc' Billy knew that he deserved every bit of it. He felt very miserable, and he was too tired to have a bit of spirit left. So he just sat at the foot of the great hollow tree and said nothing, while old Mrs. Possum bit a hole in the end of one egg and began to suck it. All the time she was looking at Unc' Billy with those sharp eyes of hers. When she had finished the egg, she pushed the other over to him. "Yo' eat that!" she said shortly. "Yo' look as if yo' hadn't had anything to eat to-day" (which was true). "Then yo' hustle up to bed; it's all ready fo' yo'."

Unc' Billy did as he was bid, and as he tucked himself into his snug, warm bed he murmured sleepily:

"Ol' Mrs. Possum has a sharp, sharp tongue,  
But her bark is worse than her bite.  
For Ol' Mrs. Possum has a soft, soft heart  
Though she hides it way out of sight."

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 4, "Unc' Billy Comes Home")*

## STORY 213. October 18, 1912.

### Sammy Jay is Indignant.

Sammy Jay was indignant. Yes, Sir, Sammy Jay was very much put out. In fact, Sammy was just plain downright mad. It is bad enough to be found out and blamed for the things you really do, but to be blamed for things that you don't do and don't even know anything about is more than even Mr. Jaybird can stand. It had begun when he met Jimmy Skunk early in the evening<sup>60</sup>.

"Hello, Sammy Jay! What were you doing up so late last night?" said Jimmy Skunk.

"I wasn't up late; I went to bed at my usual hour, just after Mr. Sun went to bed behind the Purple Hills," replied Sammy Jay.

"Oh, come, Sammy Jay, be honest for once in your life! It was a long, long, long time after Mr. Sun went to bed that I heard you screaming and making a great fuss over in the Green Forest. What was it all about?" said Jimmy Skunk.

Sammy Jay stamped one foot. He was beginning to lose his temper. You know he loses it very easily. "I am honest!" he screamed. "I tell you I went to bed just as I always do, and I didn't wake up until this morning."

"Then you must talk something dreadful in your sleep," said Jimmy Skunk, turning his back on Sammy Jay, who was so mad by this time that for a few minutes he couldn't find his tongue. When he did, he flew off screaming at the top of his lungs. He was still screaming when he flew over the old brier patch where Peter Rabbit was just beginning to doze off. Peter was sleepy. He didn't like to have his morning nap

60 Changed to "morning" in the book version.

disturbed.

“Hi, Sammy Jay! Didn’t you make racket enough last night to give honest folks a little peace and quiet today?” shouted Peter Rabbit.

Sammy Jay flew up into a young cherry tree on the edge of the old brier patch, and his eyes were fairly red with anger as he glared down at Peter Rabbit.

“What’s the joke, Peter Rabbit? That’s the second time this morning that I’ve been told that I was screaming last night, when all the time I was fast asleep,” said Sammy Jay.

“Then it’s a funny way you have of sleeping,” replied Peter Rabbit. “Come, Sammy, be honest and tell me what you were yelling ‘Thief!’ for, over in the Green Forest?”

“Peter Rabbit, you and Jimmy Skunk are crazy, just as crazy as loons!” sputtered Sammy Jay. “I tell you I was asleep, and I guess I ought to know!”

“And I guess I know your voice when I hear it!” replied Peter Rabbit. “It’s bad enough in daytime, but if I was you, I’d quit yelling in the night. Some one of these times Hooty the Owl will hear you, and that will be the end of you and your noise. Now go away; I want to sleep.”

Sammy went. He was mad clear through, and yet he didn’t know what to make of it. Were they just trying to make him mad, or had he really been screaming in his sleep? He flew over to the Smiling Pool. Jerry Muskrat looked up and saw him.

“What were you yelling about in the night, Sammy Jay?” asked Jerry.

This was too much. Sammy Jay let his wings and his tail droop dejectedly and hung his head.

“I don’t know. I really don’t know anything about it,” he said.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 5)*

## STORY 214. October 19, 1912.

### Sammy Jay Thinks He’s Going Crazy

“Sammy Jay screams all day long,  
And now what do you think?  
Why, Sammy sits and yells all night  
And doesn’t sleep a wink!”

Everywhere he went Sammy Jay heard that shouted after him. Dozens and dozens of times a day he heard it. At first he lost his temper and was the very maddest Jaybird ever seen on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest.

“It isn’t true! It isn’t true! It isn’t true!” he would scream at the top of his lungs.

And then everybody within hearing would shout: “It is true!”

Illustrations. October 14 to October 19, 1912.



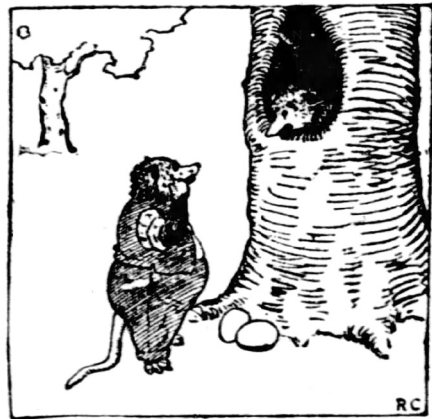
209. Happy Days on the Green Meadows



210. Unc' Billy Possum Grows Excited



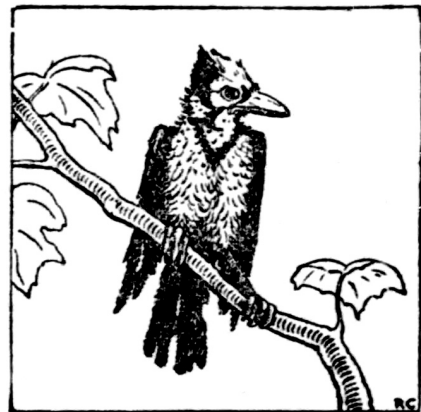
211. Unc' Billy Possum's Vain Search



212. Unc' Billy Possum Comes Home



213. Sammy Jay is Indignant



214. Sammy Jay Thinks He's Going Crazy

Sammy would just dance up and down and scream and scream and scream, he was so angry. And then he was sure to hear some one pipe up:

“Sammy’s mad and we are glad!  
And we know how to tease him!  
But some dark night he’ll get a fright,  
For Hooty’ll come and seize him!”

That really began to worry him. At first he had thought that it was all a joke on the part of the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows, and that they had made up the story about hearing him in the night. Then he began to think that it might be true that he did talk in his sleep, and this worried him a whole lot. If he did that, Hooty the Owl would surely find him sooner or later, and in the morning there wouldn’t be anything left of him but a few feathers from his fine coat.

The more he thought about it, the more worried Sammy Jay became. He lost his appetite and began to grow thin. He kept out of sight whenever possible and no longer screamed “Thief! thief!” through the Green Forest. In fact his voice was rarely heard during the day. But it seemed that he must be talking just as much as ever in the night. At least everybody said that he was.

Worse still, different ones said that they heard him in different places in the Green Forest and even down on the Green Meadows. Could it be that he was flying about as well as talking in his sleep? And nobody believed him when he said that he was asleep all night. They thought that he was awake and doing it purposely. They might have known that he couldn’t see in the night, for his eyes are made for daylight and not for darkness, like the eyes of Boomer the Nighthawk and Hooty the Owl. But they didn’t seem to think of this, and insisted that almost every night they heard him down in the alders along the Laughing Brook. Yet every morning when he awoke, Sammy would find himself just where he went to sleep the night before, safely hidden in the thickest part of a big pine-tree.

“If they are not all crazy, then I must be,” said Sammy Jay to himself, as he turned away from the breakfast which he could not eat. Then he had a happy idea. “Why didn’t I think of it before? I’ll sleep all day, and then I’ll keep awake all night and see what happens then!” he exclaimed.

So Sammy Jay hurried away to the darkest part of the Green Forest and tried to sleep through the day.

*(Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 6)*

STORY 215. October 21, 1912.

## Sammy Jay Sits Up all Night

Sammy Jay sat in the dark and shivered. Sammy was lonely, more lonely than he had ever supposed anybody could be. And to tell the truth Sammy Jay was scared. Yes, sir, that was just the way Sammy Jay felt—scared. Every time a leaf rustled, Sammy

jumped almost out of his shoes<sup>61</sup>. His heart went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat. He could hear it himself, or at least he thought he could, and it seemed to him that if Hooty the Owl should happen to come along, he would surely hear it.

You see it was the first time in all his life that Sammy Jay had not gone to sleep just as soon as jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had pulled his rosy night-cap on and gone to bed behind the purple hills. But tonight Sammy sat in the darkest, thickest part of a big pine-tree and kept blinking his eyes to keep from going to sleep. He had made up his mind that he wouldn't go to sleep at all that night, no matter how lonely and frightened he might be. He just would keep his eyes and his ears wide open.

What was he doing it for? Why, because all the little meadow and forest people insisted that every night lately Sammy Jay had spent a great part of his time screaming in the harsh, unpleasant way he does during the day, and some of them were very cross, because they said that he waked them up when they wanted to sleep. Now Sammy knew better. He never in his life had screamed in the night unless—well, unless he did it in his sleep and didn't know it. So he had made up his mind to keep awake all of this night and see if in the morning any one would say that he had waked them up.

He had watched the black shadows creep through the Green Forest and grow blacker and blacker. The blacker they became, the loner he became.

By and by it was so dark that he couldn't see anything at all, and every little noise made him shiver. It is easy to be brave in daylight, but in the dark, when you cannot see a thing, every little sound seems twice as loud as it really is and gives you such a creepy, creepy feeling. Sammy Jay had it now. He felt so creepy that it seemed as if he would crawl right out of his skin. He kept saying over and over to himself: "There's nothing to be afraid of. There's nothing to be afraid of. I'm just as safe as if I was fast asleep." But still he shivered and shook.

By and by, looking up through the top of the big pine-tree, he saw the little stars come out one by one. They seemed to be looking right down at him and winking at him in the jolliest way. Somehow, he didn't feel quite so lonely then, and he tried to wink back. Then little, soft, silvery bars of light began to creep through the branches of the trees and along the ground. They were moonbeams, and Sammy could see just a little, a very little. He began to feel better.

"Whooo-hoo-hoo, whooo-hoo!"

It was a terrible sound, fierce and hungry. Sammy Jay nearly fell from his perch. He opened his mouth to scream with fright. Then he remembered just in time and closed it without a sound. It was the hunting cry of Hooty the Owl. Sammy Jay sat huddled in a little, forlorn, shivering heap, while twice more that fierce cry rang through the Green Forest. Then a shadow floated over the big pine tree. Hooty the Owl had flown away without seeing him, and Sammy breathed easier.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 7)*

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61 Anthropomorphism. Changed to "skin" in the book version.



STORY 216. October 22, 1912.

## Sammy is Glad he Sat up all Night

Sammy Jay was having no trouble in keeping awake now. Not a bit! He couldn't have gone to sleep if he wanted to—not since Hooty the Owl had frightened him almost out of his skin with his fierce, hungry hunting call. He was too frightened and shivery and creepy to sleep. But he didn't want to, anyway, because you know, he meant to sit up wide awake all night and then see if any of the little meadow and forest people would say that he had screamed in the night. If they did, he would know then that they were just trying to tease him by saying such things, because he meant to keep his mouth closed as tight as tight and not make a single sound.

So he sat in the thickest part of the big pine tree, shivering and creepy and miserable. He heard Bobby Coon go down the Lone Little Path on his way to Farmer Brown's cornfield, where the corn was just beginning to get milky and sweet. Out in a patch of bright moonlight he saw Peter Rabbit jumping and dancing and having the greatest kind of a time all by himself. Pretty soon Peter was joined by his cousin, Jumper the Hare. Such antics as they did cut up! Sammy Jay almost laughed aloud as he watched. It was less lonely with them there, and he did want to call to them dreadfully. But that would never, never do, for no one must know that he was sitting up awake all night.

By and by along came Jimmy Skunk, walking out into the patch of bright moonlight. He touched noses with Peter Rabbit and Jumper the Hare, which is one way of saying "good evening" in the Green Forest.

"Isn't it most time for Sammy Jay to scream in his sleep?" asked Peter Rabbit. Sammy pricked up his ears.

"Scream in his sleep! Nonsense! Sammy Jay isn't any more asleep than I am. He just screams out of pure meanness to wake up and frighten good honest folks who want to sleep. For my part, I don't see what any one wants to sleep for on such a fine night as this, anyway. It serves 'em right if they do get waked up," replied Jimmy Skunk.

"But Sammy Jay says that he doesn't do it and doesn't know anything about it," said Peter Rabbit. "Have you ever seen him scream in the night, Jimmy Skunk?"

"No, I don't have to," replied Jimmy Skunk. "I guess I know his voice when I hear it, and I've heard it enough times the last few nights, goodness knows! Tell me this, Peter Rabbit, who else is there that cries 'Thief! thief! thief!' and screams like Sammy Jay?"

Peter shook his head. "I guess you're right, Jimmy Skunk. I guess you're right," he said.

"Of course I'm right. There, now!" Jimmy held up one hand to warn Peter to keep still. Sure enough, there was Sammy Jay's voice, way over in the alders beside the Laughing Brook, and it was screaming "Thief! thief! thief!"

They all heard it. Sammy Jay heard it, too, and scratched himself to be sure that he was awake and sitting there in the big pine tree.

“It’s my voice, and it isn’t my voice, for I haven’t made a sound, and it’s over in the alders while I’m here in my own big pine tree,” muttered Sammy Jay to himself. “I’m glad I kept awake, but—but—

“Maybe I’m going crazy!  
My wits are getting hazy!  
That’s surely me,  
Yet here I be!  
Oh, dear, I sure am crazy!”

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 8)*

## STORY 217. October 23, 1912.

### The Mystery Grows

“Can a body be a body,  
Yet not a body be?  
Tell a body, anybody,  
Didst such a body see?”

Of course it was Sammy Jay who was humming such a foolish-sounding rhyme as that. But really, it wasn’t so foolish in Sammy’s case, after all. He had sat up wide awake all night just to try to find out why it was that all the little meadow and forest people had complained that he spent part of each night screaming “thief! thief! thief!” just as he does in the daytime. Now he knew. Sitting in the dark in his big pine tree, he had heard his own voice, or what sounded like his own voice, screaming down in the alders by the Laughing Brook. Sammy had scratched himself to be sure that he was really and truly awake and not dreaming, for there was his voice down in the alders, and there was himself sitting in the big pine tree with his mouth closed as tight as he could shut it. Did ever a jaybird have anything so queer as that to puzzle him?

Anyway, Sammy Jay knew that he didn’t scream in his sleep, and there was a whole lot of comfort in that. He could eat with a better appetite now. You see, when he had been told that he was screaming in the night, Sammy had been afraid that he was doing it in his sleep; and if he was doing that, why, some dark night Hooty the Owl might hear him and find him, and that would be the end of him. Now he knew that he could go to sleep in peace, just as he always had.

Sammy Jay brushed and smoothed out his handsome blue coat and made himself as pert and smart appearing as possible. He had been so worried lately that he hadn’t taken much care of himself, which is very unusual for Sammy Jay.

Now, however, he felt so much better that he began to think about his looks. When he had finished dressing, he started for the alders beside the Laughing Brook just to have a look around. Of course he didn’t expect to find his voice down there, for who

ever saw a voice? Still he thought that he might find something that would explain the mystery.

He hunted all around in the thicket of alders beside the Laughing Brook, but nothing unusual did he find. Then for a long time he sat as still as still can be, studying and thinking. Finally, he thought to himself: "I'll just see how my voice really does sound down here," and opening his mouth he screamed: "Thief! thief! thief!"

Then out popped Jenny Wren, and she was so mad that she couldn't sit still a second. My, my, my, how she did scold!

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Sammy Jay! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" she sputtered. "Isn't it enough to keep us awake half the night without coming down and screaming all day?"

"I haven't been down here in the night, and I haven't kept anybody awake!" replied Sammy Jay indignantly.

Jenny Wren came right up in front of Sammy Jay and hopped up and down. She was so mad that with every word she jerked her funny little tail so that Sammy Jay almost had to laugh.

"Don't tell that to me, Sammy Jay! Don't tell that to me!" she cried. "Didn't I see you with my own eyes sitting in that alder over there? Don't tell that to me! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 9)*

## STORY 218. October 24, 1912.

### Sammy Jay Seeks Advice

Sammy Jay had a headache, such a headache! He had thought and thought and thought, until now it seemed to him that the world surely had turned topsy-turvy. His poor little head was all in a whirl, and that was what made it ache. First he had been accused of screaming in the night to waken and scare the little meadow and forest people who wanted to sleep. Then he had kept awake all night to find out what it meant, and he had heard what sounded like his own voice screaming "thief! thief! thief!" down by the Laughing Brook, when all the time he was sitting in the dark in his own big pine tree in the Green Forest.

That was bad enough, but to have Jenny Wren tell him that she had seen him with her own eyes sitting in an alder tree and screaming, at the very time that he had been back there in the big pine tree, was more than Sammy Jay could stand. It was no wonder that his head ached. Hardly any of the little meadow and forest people would speak to him now. They just turned their backs to him whenever he met them. He didn't mind this so much, because he knew that none of them had ever liked him very well. You see he had played too many mean tricks for anyone to really like him. But he did hate to have them blame him for something that he hadn't done.

“It’s too much for me!” said Sammy Jay. “It’s too much for me! I’ve thought and thought, until my brain just goes round and round and makes me dizzy, and my thoughts turn somersaults over each other. I must get help somewhere. Now, who can I go to, so few will have anything to do with me?”

“Caw, caw, caw!”

Sammy Jay pricked up his ears and spread his wings.

“My cousin, Blacky the Crow!” he cried. “Why didn’t I think of him before? He’s very smart, is Blacky the Crow, and perhaps he can tell me what to do.”

So Sammy Jay hurried as fast as he could to lay his troubles before Blacky the Crow. Blacky’s eyes twinkled as he listened to Sammy Jay’s tale of woe. When Sammy had finished and had asked for Blacky’s advice, Blacky went into a brown<sup>62</sup> study. Sammy sat and waited patiently, for he felt certain that Blacky’s shrewd head would find some plan to solve the mystery.

“I don’t know how you can find out who it is that’s making you all this trouble, but I’ll tell you how you can prove that it isn’t you that screams in the night,” said Blacky the Crow after a few minutes of thought.

“How?” asked Sammy Jay eagerly.

“Go away from the Green Meadows and the Green Forest and stay away for a week,” replied Blacky the Crow. “Go up to the far away Old Pasture on the edge of the mountain, where Reddy and Granny Fox are living. Have Boomer the Nighthawk see you go to bed there, and then ask him to come straight down here and tell Peter Rabbit just where you are. Peter will tell everyone else, for he can’t keep his tongue still, and then they’ll all know that it isn’t you that screams in the night.”

“The very thing!” cried Sammy Jay. “I’ll move at once!” And off he hurried to prepare to move up to the Old Pasture on the edge of the mountain.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 10)*

## STORY 219. October 25, 1912.

### How Blacky the Crow’s Plan Worked Out

“Thief! thief! thief!” Old Granny Fox, trotting along a cowpath in the Old Pasture on the edge of the mountain, heard it and grinned. Reddy Fox, sitting in the doorway of their new home under the great rocks in the midst of the thickest clump of bushes and young trees, heard it, too, and he grinned even more broadly than Granny Fox. It sounded good to him, did that harsh scream, for it was the first time he had heard the voice of a single one of the little meadow and forest people since he and Granny Fox had moved up to the lonesome Old Pasture.

“Now I wonder what has brought Sammy Jay way up here?” said Reddy, as he limped out to the edge of the thick tangle of bushes and young trees. Pretty soon he

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62 Replaced with “black” in the book version.

caught sight of a wonderful coat of bright blue with white trimmings.

“Hi, Sammy Jay! What are you doing up here?” shouted Reddy Fox.

Sammy Jay heard him and hurried over to where Reddy Fox was sitting.

“Hello, Reddy Fox! How are you feeling?” said Sammy Jay.

“Better, thank you. What are you doing ‘way up here in this lonely place?” replied Reddy.

“It’s a long story,” said Sammy Jay.

“Tell it to me,” begged Reddy Fox.

So Sammy Jay told him all about the trouble he had had on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest, and how hardly anyone would speak to him because they said that he kept them awake by screaming in the night. He told how he had sat up all night and had heard what sounded like his own voice, when all the time he was sitting with his mouth shut as tight as tight could be. Then he told about Blacky the Crow’s plan, which was that Sammy should come to the Old Pasture and live for a week.

Then, if the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest heard screams in the night, they would know that it was not Sammy Jay who was waking them up. Reddy Fox chuckled as he listened. You know misery likes company, and it tickled Reddy to think that someone else had been forced to leave the Green Meadows and the Green Forest.

That night Sammy Jay found a comfortable place which seemed quite safe in which to go to sleep. Just after jolly, round, red Mr. Sun went to bed behind the Purple Hills, Sammy saw Boomer the Nighthawk circling round high in the air catching his dinner.

Sammy screamed twice. Boomer heard him and down he came with a rush.

“Why, Sammy Jay, what under the sun are you doing way off here?” exclaimed Boomer.

“Going to bed,” replied Sammy. “Say, Boomer, will you do something for me?”

“That depends upon what it is,” replied Boomer.

“It’s just an errand,” replied Sammy Jay, and then he asked Boomer to go down to the Green Meadows and tell Peter Rabbit how he (Boomer) had seen Sammy going to bed ‘way up in the far-away Old Pasture.

Boomer promised that he would, and off he started. He found Peter and told him. Of course, Peter was very much surprised and, because he cannot keep his tongue still, he started off at once to tell everybody he could find, just as Blacky the Crow had thought he would do.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 11)*

Illustrations. October 21 to October 26, 1912.



215. Sammy Jay Sits Up all Night



216. Sammy is Glad He Sat Up All Night



217. The Mystery Grows



218. Sammy Jay Seeks Advice



219. How Blacky the Crow's Plan Worked Out



220. No One Believes Peter Rabbit

## STORY 220. October 26, 1912.

### No One Believes Peter Rabbit

Peter Rabbit sat in his secret place in the middle of the old brier patch. Peter was doing some very hard thinking. He ought to have been asleep, for he had been out the whole night long. But instead of sleeping, he was wide awake and thinking and thinking.

You see early the night before Boomer the Nighthawk had told Peter Rabbit that Sammy Jay was way up in the far away Old Pasture. Boomer had seen him going to bed there and had come straight down to tell Peter. This was great news, and Peter could hardly wait for Boomer to stop talking, he was so anxious to spread the news over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest, for Peter is a great gossip and cannot keep his tongue still.

So he had hurried this way and that way, telling everyone he met how Sammy Jay had moved away to the Old Pasture. But no one believed him.

“Wait and see! Wait and see!” said Jimmy Skunk.

“It’s just a trick,” said Bobby Coon.

“But Boomer the Nighthawk saw him up there going to bed and talked with him!” cried Peter Rabbit.

“Perhaps he did and then again perhaps he didn’t,” replied Bobby Coon, carefully washing an ear of sweet milky corn that he had brought down to the Laughing Brook from Farmer Brown’s cornfield, for Bobby Coon is very neat and always washes his food before eating. “For my part,” he continued, “I believe that Boomer the Nighthawk just made up that story to help Sammy Jay fool us.”

“But that would be a wrong story—a lie—and I don’t believe that Boomer would do anything like that!” cried Peter.

Just then there was a shrill scream of “Thief! thief! thief!” over in the alder bushes. It certainly sounded like Sammy Jay’s voice.

“What did I tell you? Now what do you think?” cried Bobby Coon.

Peter didn’t know what to think, and he said so. He left Bobby to eat his corn and spent the rest of the night telling everyone he met what Boomer the Nighthawk had said, but of course no one believed it, and everyone laughed at him, for hadn’t they heard Sammy Jay screaming that very night?

So now Peter sat in the old brier patch thinking and thinking, when he should have been asleep. Finally he yawned and stretched and then started along one of his private little paths.

“I’ll just run up to the Green Forest and try to find Sammy Jay,” he said.

So Peter hunted and hunted all through the Green Forest for Sammy Jay, and asked

everybody he met if they had seen Sammy. But no one had, though everyone took pains to tell Peter that they had heard Sammy in the night and they laughed at Peter's story about Boomer the Nighthawk. At last Peter found Sticky-toes the Tree Toad. He was muttering and grumbling to himself, and he didn't see Peter. Peter stopped to listen, which was, of course, a very wrong thing to do, and what he heard gave Peter an idea.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 12)*

## STORY 221. October 28, 1912.

### Sticky-toes, The Tree Toad, Pours out his Troubles

Peter Rabbit, hunting through the Green Forest for Sammy Jay, just happened across Sticky-toes, the Tree Toad, mumbling and grumbling to himself. He didn't see Peter and Peter did what he shouldn't have done—he stopped to listen to what Sticky-toes was saying. Sticky-toes was quite upset. There was no doubt about it. Either he had gotten out of the wrong side of his bed that morning, or his breakfast had disagreed with him, or something had happened to make him lose his temper completely.

“Don't know what it means! Don't know what it means! Don't know what it means!” croaked Sticky-toes the Tree Toad, over and over again. “Heard it last night and the night before that and before that and before that and before that, and I don't know what it means!”

“Don't know what what means?” asked Peter Rabbit, whose curiosity would not let him keep still.

“Hello, Longears! I don't know that it's any of your business!” said Sticky-toes.<sup>63</sup>

Peter allowed that it wasn't, but that as he had so much on his own mind he couldn't help being interested when he found that Sticky-toes had troubles too. Then he told Sticky-toes all about how Boomer the Nighthawk had said that he had seen Sammy Jay going to bed up in the far away Old Pasture, and how that very night Sammy Jay's voice had been heard screaming down in the alders beside the Laughing Brook. Sticky-toes nodded his head.

“I heard it,” said he.

“But how could Sammy Jay be down here if he went to bed way off there in the Old Pasture? Tell me that, Sticky-toes?” said Peter Rabbit.

Sticky-toes shook his head. “Don't ask me! Don't ask me! Just tell me how it is that I hear my own voice when I don't speak a word,” said Sticky-toes the Tree Toad.

“What's that?” exclaimed Peter Rabbit.

Then Sticky-toes poured out all his troubles to Peter Rabbit. They were very much

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63 In all newspaper versions of this story, the first four paragraphs, which logically precede the fifth paragraph's “Peter allowed that it wasn't...” were printed after ““What's that?” exclaimed Peter Rabbit.” This order is corrected in the book version and in the version in this volume.



like the troubles of Sammy Jay. Every night Sticky-toes would hear what sounded like his own voice coming from a tree in which he was not sitting at all, and at a time when he was keeping his mouth shut as tight as he knew how. In fact, he had been so worried that for several nights he hadn't said a word, yet his neighbors had complained that he had been very noisy. He was getting so worried that he couldn't eat.

Peter Rabbit listened with his mouth wide open. It was just the same kind of a story that Sammy Jay had told. What under the sun could be going on? Peter couldn't understand it at all. It certainly was very, very curious. He just must find out about it!

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 13)*

## STORY 222. October 29, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit meets Unc' Billy Possum.

After Sticky-toes the Tree Toad had poured out his troubles to Peter Rabbit, Peter went back to the old brier patch more puzzled than ever. If Sammy Jay was asleep in the far-away Old Pasture on the edge of the mountain, how could he be at the same time down in the Green Forest screaming? Yet every one said that he was there, and Peter had heard a voice which sounded exactly like Sammy Jay's and cried "Thief! thief! thief!" just as Sammy Jay does. And if Sticky-toes the Tree Toad sat all night with his mouth shut tight, how could the voice of Sticky-toes be heard in an altogether different tree than the one Sticky-toes was spending the night in? Wasn't it enough to drive any one crazy?

The more Peter studied over it, the more puzzled he grew. The next night he started out for the Green Forest with a new plan in his head. He would hide down among the alders by the Laughing Brook. He would see for himself who was screaming with the voice of Sammy Jay and talking with the voice of Sticky-toes the Tree Toad. He just had to know!

So across the Green Meadows and up the Lone Little Path hurried Peter Rabbit, so as to reach the Laughing Brook before jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had wholly turned out his light, after going to bed behind the Purple Hills. He was hurrying so that he almost ran into Unc' Billy Possum.

"Yo' seem to be in a powerful hurry, Brer Rabbit," said Unc' Billy.

"I am," replied Peter. "I must get down to the Laughing Brook before dark."

"'Pears to me it must be mighty impo'tant to make yo' hurry this a-way?" said Unc' Billy Possum.

"It is," replied Peter Rabbit. "It's to keep me from going crazy."

Unc' Billy looked at Peter very hard for a few minutes, just as if he thought that Peter was crazy already. Then he put a hand behind one ear just as if he was hard of hearing. "Ah beg yo' parhdon, Brer Rabbit, but Ah doan seem to have it quite right in mah haid what yo'all am going down to the Laughing Brook for," said Unc' Billy in the

politest way.

Peter chuckled in spite of himself, as he once more replied: "It's to keep me from going crazy."

Then Peter told Unc' Billy all about Sammy Jay's troubles and all about the troubles of Sticky-toes the Tree Toad. It was the first Unc' Billy Possum had heard about it, for Unc' Billy had been away from the Green Forest and the Green Meadows for a visit and had just returned. He listened to all that Peter Rabbit had to say, and a funny, pleased sort of look came into his eyes.

"Ah reckon Ah will go along with yo'all," said he.

So Unc' Billy Possum went with Peter Rabbit to the Laughing Brook, where they hid underneath the alders.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 14)*

## STORY 223. October 30, 1912.

### Peter and Unc' Billy Possum Keep Watch

Snugly hidden under the alder bushes beside the Laughing Brook sat Peter Rabbit and Unc' Billy Possum.

"Now," said Peter Rabbit, as they settled themselves to watch, "we'll see for ourselves whether Sammy Jay and Sticky-toes have been telling the truth, or if they have been dreaming. If we hear Sammy Jay's voice down here in the alders tonight, we ought to be able to see who is using it, for pretty soon the moon will be up, and then we can see easily."

Unc' Billy Possum didn't say anything, not a word, but if Peter Rabbit had noticed Unc' Billy's eyes, he would have seen a very knowing look there. The fact is, Unc' Billy was thinking of the time when he thought he had heard the voice of an old friend of his from way down South, and he was beginning to suspect that he had been right, and that his old friend really was somewhere in the Green Forest.

"Ah reckon he sho'ly is, and he's plumb full of his ol' tricks, just like he used to be," muttered Unc' Billy.

"What's that?" asked Peter, pricking up his ears.

"Nuffin' nuffin', Brer Rabbit, nuffin at all. Ah has a habit of just talking foolishness to mahself," replied Unc' Billy.

Peter looked at him sharply, but Unc' Billy's sharp little face looked so innocent that Peter was ashamed to doubt what Unc' Billy said.

"I guess that we better not talk any more for fear we might be heard and have our watch for nothing," said Peter.

Unc' Billy agreed, and side by side they sat as still as if they were made of wood or stone. The black shadows came early to the alders beside the Laughing Brook, and

soon it was very dark, so dark that Peter and Unc' Billy, whose eyes are meant for seeing in the dark as well as in the light, had hard work to make out much. It grew later and later, and still there was not a sound of the voice of either Sammy Jay or Sticky-toes the Tree Toad. Peter began to get hungry. The more he thought about it, the hungrier he grew. He was just about ready to give it up, when the moonbeams began to creep in among the alder trees just as they had crept through the Green Forest the night that Sammy Jay kept awake.

The moonbeams crept farther and farther into the thicket of alder trees and bushes where Peter Rabbit and Unc' Billy Possum were hiding. Then it was that they heard the voice of Sticky-toes the Tree Toad. At any rate, Peter was sure that it was the voice of Sticky-toes until a fierce, angry whisper came down to him from the branch of an alder just over his head. Peter looked up. There sat Sticky-toes himself, but his voice was coming from an alder on the other side of the Laughing Brook.

"Do you hear that? Do you hear that? There's my voice over there, and here I am here! What do you make of it?" whispered Sticky-toes.

Peter didn't know what to make of it. All he could do was to gaze at Sticky-toes as if he thought Sticky-toes was a ghost. Just then the voice of Sammy Jay, or what sounded for all the world like Sammy's voice, screamed "Thief! thief! thief!" from the very spot where they had just heard the voice of Sticky-toes.

Peter turned to ask Unc' Billy Possum what he thought, but Unc' Billy wasn't there.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 15)*

## STORY 224. October 31, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Does a Little Surprising Himself.

When Unc' Billy Possum, sitting in the dark beside Peter Rabbit down among the alders that grow along the Laughing Brook, first heard what sounded like the voice of Sticky-toes the Tree Toad, he had thought, just as Peter Rabbit did, that Sticky-toes was over in an alder tree on the other side of the Laughing Brook. But when he heard a whisper right over their heads and looked up to see Sticky-toes himself, Unc' Billy almost chuckled out loud.

Yo' can't fool Uncle Billy,  
So don't go fo' to try!  
Ah knows yo', yes, Ah knows yo'—  
Ah knows yo', Mistah Sly!

He said that to himself and quite under his breath, for all the time that Peter Rabbit and Sticky-toes the Tree Toad were whispering together, Unc' Billy Possum was stealing away under the alder bushes. Unc' Billy is very soft-footed, oh, very soft-footed indeed, when he wants to be. You see one must needs be very soft-footed to steal eggs in Farmer Brown's henhouse. So Unc' Billy stole away without making a sound,

and when Peter Rabbit turned to speak to him, there was no Unc' Billy there.

Peter rubbed his eyes and stared all around, this way and that way, but no sign of Unc' Billy could he see. This so surprised Peter Rabbit that he felt queer all over. First there was the voice of Sticky-toes over on the other side of the Laughing Brook, when all the time Sticky-toes wasn't there at all. Now here Unc' Billy Possum had disappeared, just as if the earth had swallowed him up.

"This isn't any place for me!" said Peter Rabbit, and off he started for the Green Meadows as fast as he could go, lipperty-lipperty-lip!

All this time Unc' Billy Possum had been crawling along without the tiniest sound. When he came to the Laughing Brook, he went up a way until he found a big tree with a branch stretching clear across the Laughing Brook. Of course Unc' Billy could have swum across, but he didn't feel like swimming that night, so he climbed up the big tree, ran out along the branch, let himself down by the tail, and then dropped. He was across the Laughing Brook without even wetting his feet.

Unc' Billy didn't waste any time. Just as soft-footed as before, he crept along in the darkest shadows until he was right under the alder tree from which the complaining voice of Sticky-toes the Tree Toad seemed to come. Unc' Billy listened, and the longer he listened, the broader grew the smile on Unc' Billy's shrewd face.

"Thief! thief! thief!"

It certainly sounded for all the world like Sammy Jay's voice, and it was right over Unc' Billy's head. Unc' Billy peered up through the alders. The leaves were so thick that he could not see very well, but what he did see was enough. It was a long tail, a tail of feathers hanging down. It wasn't Sammy Jay's tail, either.

"Doan yo'all think that yo'all have joked enough?" asked Unc' Billy, trying hard to keep from chuckling aloud.

A cry of "thief" stopped right in the middle, and two sharp eyes looked down in surprise at Unc' Billy.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 16)*

## STORY 225. November 1, 1912.

### The Meeting of Two Old Friends.

When Unc' Billy Possum, looking up through the alder branches, saw a long tail, a tail of feathers, hanging down, he knew right away that it wasn't the tail of Sammy Jay, although its owner seemed to have the voice of Sammy Jay. Unc' Billy knew just whose tail it was. Yes, sir, he knew that tail and it certainly did look good to Unc' Billy. He was so tickled when he first saw it that for a minute he couldn't say a word. Then he said:

"Doan yo'all think that yo'all have joked enough?"

That question stopped a cry of "Thief!" right in the middle, and two sharp eyes

looked down right into Unc' Billy's. Unc' Billy was grinning as he hadn't grinned since he welcomed his family from way down in ol' Virginny.

"Why, Unc' Billy Possum! What are yo'all doing way up here?" cried the owner of the long tail and sharp eyes.

"This is mah home now; Ah done moved up here," replied Unc' Billy. "'Pears to me that the question is what am yo'all doing way off up here? Ah thought Ah sho'ly done hear your voice the other night, and Ah most wore mah po' feet out looking fo' yo'. Then Ah thought Ah was mistaken, but now Ah reckon that Ah was right, after all. My, but Ah am right smart glad to see yo'!"

"Thank yo', Unc' Billy," replied the owner of the long tail and the sharp eyes. "Ah reckon yo' can't be any more glad to see me, than Ah am to see yo'. Fact is, Ah was getting right smart lonesome. Ah done been lying low daytimes, because, yo' know, Ah'm a stranger up here, and Ah was afraid that strangers might not be welcome in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows."

"'Pears like if all Ah hear am true, that yo' haven't done much lying low nights. Ah reckon yo' done make up fo' those lonesome feelings. Yes, sah, Ah reckon so. Mah goodness, man, yo' done set everybody to running around like they was crazy!" exclaimed Unc' Billy.

The owner of the long tail and sharp eyes threw back his head and laughed, and his laugh was like the most beautiful music. It made Unc' Billy feel good just listening to it.

"Sammy Jay done moved away to the Ol' Pasture since things were so unpleasant here because everybody said he screamed all night," continued Unc' Billy Possum. "He sat up all of one night just to make sho' that he didn't scream in his sleep, and he didn't make a sound the whole night long. The next mo'ning everybody said that he had been screaming just the same, and po' Sammy Jay just moved away. Yo' ought to be ashamed to play such jokes." Unc' Billy grinned as he said it.

"Thief! thief!" came in Sammy Jay's voice right out of the mouth of the owner of the long tail and sharp eyes. Then both little rascals laughed fit to kill themselves.

"Yo' come over to my house," said Unc' Billy. "My ol' woman sho' will be right smart glad to see yo', and she's gwine to be powerful surprised, deed she am! She done been laughing at me fo' a week, because Ah was sho' Ah done hear yo' that night."

So off the two started to see old Mrs. Possum, and for the rest of that night Sticky-toes the Tree Toad listened in vain for the sound of his own voice when his lips were closed tight.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 17)*

Illustrations. October 28 to November 2, 1912.



221. Stickytoes, The Tree Toad, Pours Out His Troubles



222. Peter Rabbit Meets Unc' Billy Possum



223. Peter and Unc' Billy Possum Keep Watch



224. Unc' Billy Possum Does a Little Surprising Himself



225. The Meeting of Two Old Friends



226. The Mischief Makers

## STORY 226. November 2, 1912.

### The Mischief Makers

There was a dreadful time on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest. Oh, dear, dear, dear! It really was dreadful! First Sammy Jay had been accused of screaming in the night and keeping honest little meadow and forest people awake when they wanted to sleep. And all the time Sammy Jay hadn't made a sound. Then Sticky-toes the Tree Toad had been accused of being noisy, when all the time he was sitting with his mouth closed as tight as tight could be. Sammy Jay had moved away to the Old Pasture, but no one believed that, for they still heard his voice in the night and said that he was hiding during the day. Sticky-toes had worried himself almost sick because no one would believe him when he said that he hadn't made a sound.

All this was bad enough, but now things were so much worse that it was getting so that no one would have anything to do with anyone else. Those who had been the very best of friends would pass without speaking. You see, everybody on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest knows everybody else by their voice. So when Jimmy Skunk, happening along near the Smiling Pool, heard Mrs. Redwing's voice, he didn't waste any time trying to see Mrs. Redwing. Instead, he went straight over and told Johnny Chuck the unkind things that he had overheard Mrs. Redwing saying about Johnny.

In the same way Bobby Coon heard the voice of Blacky the Crow in Farmer Brown's corn-field, and when Bobby listened, he heard some things not at all nice about himself. And so it was, all over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest. It seemed as if almost everybody was heard talking about someone else, and never saying nice things.

The only one who still managed to keep on good terms with everybody was Unc' Billy Possum. No one had ever heard him saying unkind things about others and so, because now there were so few others to talk to, everybody was glad to see Unc' Billy coming, and he soon was the best liked of all the little meadow and forest people. He went about trying to smooth out the troubles, and to see him you never, never would have guessed that he had anything to do with making them. My, my, no, indeed!

But every night when the moon was up, Unc' Billy would have a caller, who would come and sit just outside the doorway of Unc' Billy's house and scream "Thief! thief! thief!" Then out would pop Unc' Billy's sharp little face, and then his fat little body would follow, and he and his friend with the long tail and the sharp eyes, for of course you have guessed that is who it was, would put their heads together and laugh and chuckle as if they were enjoying the best joke ever was. Then they would whisper and sometimes talk right out loud, when they felt sure that no one was near to hear.

What were they talking about? Why, about the trouble on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest, and what a joke it all was, and what was the best way to keep it up. You see, the reason that no one heard Unc' Billy saying mean things or heard any mean things said about Unc' Billy was because it was Unc' Billy himself and his friend with

the long tail and the sharp eyes who were making all the trouble. Yes, sir, they were the mischief-makers. It was great fun to fool everybody so. They never once stopped to think how very, very uncomfortable it kept everybody feeling.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 17)*

## STORY 227. November 4, 1912.

### Bobby Coon Makes A Discovery.

Bobby Coon had overslept. Usually Bobby is astir shortly after jolly, round, red Mr. Sun has gone to bed behind the Purple Hills. But Bobby is very irregular in his habits. He is very fond of traveling about in the night, is Bobby Coon, and when he does that, he sleeps the greater part of the day. But once in a while he takes a notion to travel about by daylight, and when he does that, why of course he has to sleep part of the night, anyway. Bobby Coon is a very lucky chap, very lucky indeed, for he can see in the dark, and yet, unlike Hooty the Owl, he has no trouble in seeing in the broad daylight as well as does Hooty the Owl<sup>64</sup>.

This night of which I am telling you, Bobby Coon had overslept because he had not gone to bed until the middle of the day. He had been prowling about and getting into mischief all of the night before and had not started for home until jolly, round Mr. Sun was smiling down from right overhead. By this time Bobby Coon had sticks in his eyes. He was so sleepy that it seemed to him that he never, never could get home. He was stumbling along through the Green Forest when he came to a hollow log. What do you think he did? Why, he crawled in there, and in two minutes was fast asleep, just as comfortable as if he had been in his own hollow tree.

There Bobby slept all the rest of the day and until long after Mr. Sun had pulled on his rosy nightcap. Perhaps he would have slept there all night, if he hadn't been waked up. It was the cry of "Thief! thief! thief!" that waked him. It seemed to come from right over his head.

"Sammy Jay ought to be ashamed of himself, waking honest people like this!" muttered Bobby Coon, as he yawned and stretched. At first he couldn't think where he was. Then he remembered.

He was just getting ready to crawl out of the hollow log, when he heard something which made him stop and try to sit up so suddenly that he bumped his head. What he heard was the voice of Unc' Billy Possum, and he knew by the sound that Unc' Billy was sitting on the very log in which he himself was hiding.

"This is the greatest joke that ever was!" said Unc' Billy. "Pretty soon nobody on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest will speak to anybody else excepting me. Yo' cert'nly have got all yo' ol' tricks with yo'."

"Yes," replied a voice which Bobby Coon had never heard before, but which he knew right away must belong to someone who had come from way down South where

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64 Error repeated. Great Horned Owls see fine in daylight.



Unc' Billy Possum and Ol' Mistah Buzzard had come from. "Yes," said the voice, "Ah done got all mah ol' tricks and some more. But it's easy, Unc' Billy, it's easy to fool yo' new friends, because Ah reckon they never have been fooled this a-way before. Doan yo' think it is most time to stop? Ah done want to show myself in daylight. Besides, if Ah'm found out, nobody ain't gwine to have anything to do with me."

"Don't yo' worry. Nobody's gwine to find yo' out. We'll keep it up just a day or two longer. Yo' cert'nly am powerful good at imitating other people's voices. Ah wonder that Ol' Mistah Buzzard hasn't got his eye on yo' before now," said Unc' Billy Possum.

Bobby Coon had become wide awake as he listened. He tried hard to get a peep at the stranger with Unc' Billy, but all he could see was a long tail of feathers. Bobby waited until Unc' Billy and his friend had left. Then he crawled out of the hollow log, and he was chuckling to himself.

"I'll just have a little talk with Ol' Mistah Buzzard," said Bobby to himself.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 19)*

## STORY 228. November 5, 1912.

### Bobby Coon and Ol' Mistah Buzzard Have a Talk.

Bobby Coon had spent the largest part of the forenoon sitting at the foot of the tall dead tree on which Ol' Mistah Buzzard likes to roost. All the time Ol' Mistah Buzzard had been sailing round and round in circles way up in the blue, blue sky, sometimes so high that to Bobby he looked like just a tiny speck. Bobby had watched him until his own neck ached. Mistah Buzzard hardly ever moved his wings. He just sailed and sailed and sailed up and down and round and round, just as if it was no work at all but pure fun, as indeed it was.

Bobby Coon had waited so long that it was almost more than he could do to be patient any longer, but if you really want a thing, it is worth waiting for, and so Bobby gave a great sigh and tried to make himself more comfortable. At last Mistah Buzzard came sailing down straight for the tall dead tree. With two or three flaps of his great wings he settled down on his favorite perch and looked down at Bobby Coon.

"Good mo'ning, Brer Coon," said Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

"Good morning, Mistah Buzzard; I hope you are feeling very well this morning," replied Bobby Coon as politely as he knew how.

"Fair to middling well," said Ol' Mistah Buzzard, with a twinkle in his eyes. "What can Ah do fo' yo'all?"

"If you please, Mistah Buzzard, you can tell me if there is anybody way down South where you come from who can make his voice sound just like the voices of other people. Is there?" Bobby was using his very politest manner.

"Cert'nly! Cert'nly!" chuckled Ol' Mistah Buzzard. "It's Mistah Mocker. Why,

that bird just likes to go around making trouble; he just naturally likes to. He just goes around mocking everything and everybody he hears, until sometimes it seems like yo' couldn't be sure of yo' own voice when yo' hear it. Why do yo' ask, Brer Coon?"

"Because he is right here in the Green Forest now," replied Bobby Coon.

"What's that yo' am a saying, Brer Coon? What's that?" cried Ol' Mistah Buzzard, growing very excited.

Then Bobby Coon told Ol' Mistah Buzzard all about the trouble on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest; how Sammy Jay had moved away to the Old Pasture so that no one could say that he screamed in the night, and yet how his voice was still heard; how Sticky-toes the Tree Toad was almost crazy because his neighbors said he was noisy, when all the time he was sitting with his mouth tight closed; and finally, how all the little meadow and forest people refused to speak to one another because of the many unkind things which had been overheard. And Bobby told what he had overheard the night before when Unc' Billy Possum and a stranger had sat on the very log in which Bobby had been taking a nap. Ol' Mistah Buzzard chuckled.

"Yo' might have known Unc' Billy was behind all that trouble," said he. "Yes, sah, yo' might have known that ol' rascal was behind it. When Unc' Billy Possum and Mocker get their haids together, there sho'ly am gwine to be something doing."

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 20)*

## STORY 229. November 6, 1912.

### Bobby Coon has a Busy Day.

Bobby Coon had left Ol' Mistah Buzzard sitting on his favorite dead tree. Every few minutes Ol' Mistah Buzzard would chuckle. "Brer Coon is right smart, and Ah reckon Unc' Billy Possum is gwine to get a taste of his own medicine. Yes, sah, Ah reckon he am!" said Ol' Mistah Buzzard. Then he chuckled and chuckled, as he spread his broad wings and said, "Ah reckon Ah better be up in the blue, blue sky where Ah can look right down and see all the fun."

In the meantime, Bobby Coon was hurrying back and forth across the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest, calling on all the little people who live there. He whispered a few words in the ear of one and then hurried on to whisper to the next one. When Bobby would first begin to whisper, the one to whom he was whispering would shake his head and look as if he didn't believe a word of what Bobby was saying. Then Bobby would point to Ol' Mistah Buzzard sailing round and round high up in the blue, blue sky where everybody could see him, and whisper some more, and when he got through, he always carried away with him a promise that just what he had asked should be done.

You see, it was this way: Bobby Coon just happened to take a nap in a hollow log on which Unc' Billy Possum and a friend of his from way down south, a stranger to the Green Forest, just happened to sit down and talk over the great joke that they were

playing on the little people of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows. It was a joke which was making all kinds of trouble, dreadful trouble.

It seems that the stranger whom nobody but Unc' Billy knew was in the Green Forest, could make his voice sound just like the voices of other little people. So he would hide and say unkind things about others, always in a voice which sounded exactly like the voice of someone else. Of course these things were overheard, and pretty soon no one would speak to anyone else excepting to Unc' Billy Possum. You know the stranger was a friend of Unc' Billy and took great care to say only the nicest things about Unc' Billy. Of course, Unc' Billy was becoming very, very popular, so he kept urging his friend with the queer voice to keep right on with the trick and not make himself known.

Bobby Coon had heard it all as he lay in the hollow log. As soon as the way was clear, he had hurried over to call on Ol' Mistah Buzzard, who also came from way down South. Ol' Mistah Buzzard had said right away that the stranger must be his old friend Mocker, and that it was just like Mocker and Unc' Billy Possum to put their heads together and play such a joke on the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. It was then that Bobby Coon had thought of a plan to turn the joke on Unc' Billy Possum, and this was why he was hurrying back and forth whispering in the ears of every one who lived on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest; that is everybody excepting Unc' Billy Possum and his family. It was the busiest day that Bobby Coon could remember.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 21, part 1)*

## STORY 230. November 7, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Gets a Surprise.

Unc' Billy Possum was trotting along the Crooked Little Path down the hill. He was just starting out on his daily round of calls, and he was grinning as only Unc' Billy Possum can grin.

“Mah name is Billy Possum and mah home's a hollow tree!  
By day or night Ah wander forth—it's all the same to me!  
Ah fill mah stomach with an egg, or sometimes it is fish;  
In fact Ah always helps mahself to anything Ah wish.  
Fo' mah name is Billy Possum and mah other name is Smart;  
To catch yo' Uncle Billy, yo' must make an early start.”

Unc' Billy was singing this to himself as he trotted along the Crooked Little Path, and all the time he was thinking of the great joke that he and his old friend Mr. Mocker, from way down South, were playing on the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. Until Bobby Coon found it out, no one had known that Mocker was in the Green Forest. So Mocker, who can make his voice sound exactly like the voices of other little people had hidden himself and called out mean things in other people's voices until no one would speak to anyone else excepting Unc' Billy Possum, about

whom Mocker said only the kindest things. Of course, with no one else to talk to, everybody was dreadfully glad to see Unc' Billy when he made his round of calls and almost always he was sure to find something especially nice to eat waiting for him.

This morning he was on his way to call first on Johnny Chuck. Half-way down the hill he met Bobby Coon. Unc' Billy stopped and held out one hand as he said "Good mo'ning, Bobby<sup>65</sup> Coon. How do yo'all do this fine mo'ning?"

Bobby Coon walked right past as if he didn't see Unc' Billy at all. He didn't even look at him.

"What's the matter with yo' this mo'ning, Bobby Coon?" shouted Unc' Billy. Bobby Coon kept right on, without so much as turning his head. Unc' Billy watched him, and there was a puzzled look on Unc' Billy's face. "Must be that Bobby Coon has something powerful impo'tant on his mind," muttered Unc' Billy, as he started on.

Pretty soon he met Jimmy Skunk who had always been one of Unc' Billy's best friends. Jimmy was looking under every stick and stone for beetles for his breakfast.

"Good morning, Neighbor Skunk!" said Unc' Billy in his heartiest voice.

Jimmy Skunk, who never hurries, kept right on pulling over sticks and stones just as if he didn't see or hear Unc' Billy at all. In fact, when he pulled over one stone, he dropped it right on Unc' Billy's tail and didn't seem to hear Unc' Billy's "Ouch!" as he pulled his tail from under the stone. Jimmy just went right on about his business.

Unc' Billy sat down and scratched his head. His face had lost the cheerful grin with which he had started out. Pretty soon he started on, but every few minutes he would stop and scratch his head thoughtfully. He didn't know what to make of Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk. He was so surprised that he hadn't known whether to be angry or not.

"Ah must find out what Johnny<sup>66</sup> Chuck knows about it," thought Unc' Billy, as he trotted on.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 21, part 2)*

## STORY 231. November 8, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Sees Many Backs.

Unc' Billy Possum was very sober as he hurried down the Lone Little Path to Johnny Chuck's house. He was very sober indeed, and that is very unusual for Unc' Billy Possum. It was very plain to see that something was bothering him. The fact is, he had just met Bobby Coon and Jimmy Skunk and both had passed him as if they did

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65 Changed to "Brer" Coon in book version.

66 Changed to "Brer" Chuck in book version.

not see him at all. He knew that they did see him because they had been so close that he had tried to shake hands and had said “Good mo’ning!” to each. But they had paid no attention to him, but had acted just as if he had not been there at all. Unc’ Billy didn’t know what to make of it, and now he was hurrying down to Johnny Chuck’s house to find out what Johnny Chuck knew about it.

Johnny Chuck was sitting on his doorstep when Unc’ Billy Possum came in sight, trotting down the Lone Little Path. As soon as Johnny saw him, he turned his back squarely towards Unc’ Billy and pretended to be very much interested in something way off in the other direction. Unc’ Billy came to a stop about two feet behind Johnny Chuck.

“A-hem!” said Unc’ Billy.

Johnny Chuck sat there without moving, just as if he hadn’t heard. “It’s a fine mo’ning,” said Unc’ Billy in his pleasantest voice.

Instead of replying, Johnny Chuck suddenly kicked up his heels and disappeared inside his house. Unc’ Billy scratched his head with one hand and then with the other, and all the time his face grew more and more puzzled-looking. After a while he started on. Pretty soon he came to where Danny Meadow Mouse was playing all by himself. He didn’t know that Unc’ Billy was about until Unc’ Billy said: “Good mo’ning, Danny<sup>67</sup> Meadow Mouse.”

Now Danny had always been delighted to see Unc’ Billy Possum and to have a chat with him whenever Unc’ Billy would stop. But this morning no sooner did Danny hear Unc’ Billy’s voice than he turned his back to Unc’ Billy. This was more than Unc’ Billy could stand. He reached out to take Danny Meadow Mouse by the ear to turn him around, but somehow Danny must have guessed what Unc’ Billy meant to do, for without a word he ducked out of sight under the long grass, and hunt as he would Unc’ Billy couldn’t find him.

So Unc’ Billy Possum gave it up and went on down to the Smiling Pool. There Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink and Jerry Muskrat were at play. They saw Unc’ Billy coming, and when he reached the bank of the Smiling Pool there sat the three little scamps on the Big Rock, but all he could see was their backs.

“Hello, yo’alls!” shouted Unc’ Billy.

Splash! All three had dived into the Smiling Pool, and though Unc’ Billy waited and waited, he didn’t see one of them again. Even Grandfather Frog turned his back to him and seemed very deaf that morning, though Unc’ Billy tried and tried to make him hear.

All day long, wherever he went, Unc’ Billy saw only the backs of his friends, and none of them seemed to see him at all. So he went home to his hollow tree in the Green Forest early that day to try and study out what it all meant.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 22)*

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67 Brer Meadow Mouse in book version.

Illustrations. November 4 to November 9, 1912.



227. Bobby Coon Makes A Discovery



228. Bobby Coon and Ol' Mistah Buzzard Have a Talk



229. Bobby Coon Has a Busy Day



230. Unc' Billy Possum Gets a Surprise



231. Unc' Billy Possum Sees Many Backs



232. Unc' Billy Possum Sees Many Backs

STORY 232. November 9, 1912.

## Unc' Billy Possum Consults Ol' Mistah Buzzard

Ol' Mistah Buzzard has very sharp eyes. Nobody has sharper eyes than he. Swinging round and round and round and round in great circles way up in the blue, blue sky, so high that sometimes he looks like nothing but a little speck, he looks down and sees everything going on in the Green Meadows and a great deal that goes on in the Green Forest. There is very little that Ol' Mistah Buzzard misses. So all the day that Unc' Billy Possum had been tramping over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest and finding everybody's back turned to him, Ol' Mistah Buzzard had been watching and laughing fit to kill himself. You see he knew all about Bobby Coon's visit to all the little meadow and forest people, and how Bobby had whispered in the ear of each that Unc' Billy Possum was partly to blame for all the trouble they had had lately. Then each one had promised to turn his back on Unc' Billy Possum the very next time that he should come along, and this is what had happened.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard watched Unc' Billy go home and sit down with his chin in his hands and study and study, just as if he had something on his mind. By and by Unc' Billy looked up in the sky where Ol' Mistah Buzzard was sailing round and round. Then Unc' Billy hopped up mighty spry and reached for his hat.

"Ah reckon Unc' Billy 'lows he'll make me a visit," said Ol' Mistah Buzzard with a chuckle, as he slid down, down out of the sky to the tall dead tree in the Green Forest, which is his favorite roosting-place. He hadn't been there long when Unc' Billy Possum came shuffling along, just as if he was out walking for his health.

"Howdy, Mistah Buzzard! Ah cert'nly hopes yo'all feel right smart," said Unc' Billy.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard's eyes twinkled as he replied:

"Ah feel right pert, Brer Possum, thank yo'. Ah hopes yo' feel the same. Yo' look like nothing ever bothers yo'."

Unc' Billy grinned, but at the same time he looked a little foolish as he said: "That's right, Mistah Buzzard, that's right! Nothing ever does bother me." And all the time he was wondering however he should ask for Ol' Mistah Buzzard's advice and not let him know that something really was bothering him a great deal.

"Ah watched yo' take a long walk this mo'ning, Brer Possum," said Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

"Did yo', indeed; yo' have keen eyes, Mistah Buzzard!" replied Unc' Billy.

"Ah saw yo' meet a lot of yo' friends. It's fine to have a lot of friends, isn't it, Brer Possum?" said Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

Unc' Billy looked at Ol' Mistah Buzzard sharply. He wondered if Mistah Buzzard had noticed that all those friends had turned their backs on Unc' Billy that morning, but Mistah Buzzard looked as sober and solemn as a judge. All at once Ol' Mistah Buzzard

hopped up and turned around, so that all Unc' Billy could see of him was his back. Unc' Billy stared, and for a minute he couldn't find his tongue. Then he heard a noise that sounded very much like a chuckle. In a few minutes it was a laugh. Finally Unc' Billy began to laugh too.

“Yo' take mah advice and bring mah ol' friend Mocker out of his hiding place and introduce him to the Green Meadows and the Green Forest,” said Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

*(Adventures of Mr. Mocker; Chapter 23, part 1)*

## STORY 233. November 11, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum Thinks it Over.

It had been a great joke. At least Unc' Billy had thought so. And now that the joke had been turned back on him Unc' Billy enjoyed it almost as much as when it was the other way around. You see it was this way: Smooth-tongued Mr. Mockingbird, who was an old friend and neighbor of Unc' Billy when Unc' Billy lived way down in ol' Virginny, had come up to the Green Forest. Nobody saw him come and Mocker kept out of sight during the day. Then just for fun, he would scream in the night with the voice of Sammy Jay and everybody thought it was Sammy Jay.

Unc' Billy Possum found him out and then Unc' Billy had planned a still bigger trick. He had got Mocker to hide and then, when other little people were passing, to call out mean things, always in a voice that sounded like that of someone else. He made up dreadful stories about everyone but Unc' Billy Possum and pretty soon none of the little meadow and forest people would speak to anyone but Unc' Billy. Then Bobby Coon had found out all about the trick. He had hurried around to all the little meadow and forest people with a plan to get even with Unc' Billy. All that day Unc' Billy had been around making calls and everybody he had met had turned their back to him and pretended not to see him.

At first Unc' Billy hadn't known what to make of it, but after thinking it over for a long time and going to see his old friend, Ol' Mistah Buzzard, he knew that he had been found out. Ol' Mistah Buzzard had advised him to take Mr. Mockingbird around and introduce him to all the little meadow and forest people, but Unc' Billy was afraid that they might not forgive the tricks that Mocker had played on them, and then, of course, he couldn't stay in the Green Forest.

So Unc' Billy scratched his head and thought and thought of how he could get Mr. Mocker out of the trouble he had got him into. Finally he told all his troubles to old Mrs. Possum and asked her advice, as he should have done in the first place

“Serves yo'alls right! It cert'nly does serve yo'alls right!” grunted Mrs. Possum, who was so busy looking after her eight lively babies that she had little time for fooling.



“Ah know it. It cert’nly does,” replied Unc’ Billy meekly.

Mischief always trots ahead of grim ol’ Mistah Trouble,  
They look and act enough alike to be each other’s double.  
Whoever fools with Mischief’s gwine to wake some day or other  
And find that Trouble’s just the same as Mischief’s own twin brother.

Unc’ Billy Possum listened to this just as if he had never heard it before, and nodded his head as if he agreed with every word of it. Old Mrs. Possum grumbled and scolded, but all the time she was thinking, and Unc’ Billy knew that she was. Finally she finished sweeping the doorsteps and leaned on her broom to look<sup>68</sup> thoughtfully at Unc’ Billy.

“Why don’t yo’ give a party fo’ Mistah Mocking-bird?” she inquired.

“The very thing!” cried Unc’ Billy, and like a flash back came his old-time grin.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 23, part 2)*

## STORY 234. November 12, 1912.

### Unc’ Billy Possum Gives a Party.

Unc’ Billy Possum’s party was the greatest event in the Green Forest since the famous surprise party which Peter Rabbit gave when Unc’ Billy’s family arrived from way down in Ol’ Virginny. At first Unc’ Billy had been afraid that no one would come. You see, he had been the cause of a lot of the trouble on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest, and he knew that now all the little meadow and forest people had found him out. So he didn’t dare send his invitations around by the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind, for fear that no one would pay any heed to them. Of course that meant that Unc’ Billy must take them around himself.

My, but that was hard work! It was the hardest work that Unc’ Billy had ever done in all his life, for you know Unc’ Billy is happy-go-lucky and takes things easy. But getting those invitations around—well, as Unc’ Billy said he, ‘like to wore holes plumb through the soles of mah feet’ before he got all of them delivered.<sup>69</sup> It took him two whole days. In the first place there were so many to see. And then it was such hard work to deliver the invitations, because when his old friends saw him, they would promptly turn their backs to him and pretend they didn’t see him at all. Then Unc’ Billy would take off his hat and make a sweeping bow just as if the one he was talking to was facing instead of back to him, and he would say:

“Ah begs yo’ pardon, ‘deed Ah do,  
Fo’ all the trouble Ah’ve caused yo’,  
And hopes that Ah may sho’ly choke  
If it was meant fo’ more’n a joke.  
So please fo’give ol’ Uncle Bill

---

68 Anthropomorphism, removed in book version.

69 Anthropomorphism, retained in book version.

And show yo' friendship for him still  
By taking this as an invite  
To join with me next Monday night  
Aroun' mah famous hollow tree,  
And help me to full merry be,  
To greet an oldtime friend of mine;  
Ah'm sho' yo's bound to like him fine."

Then Unc' Billy would make another low bow and hurry on to the next one.

Of course he couldn't tell whether or not any one would accept the invitation, but he went right on with his plans, just as if he expected everybody to be there. And when the time came, sure enough everybody was there, even Sammy Jay, to whom Unc' Billy had sent a special invitation by Ol' Mistah Buzzard. Mistah Buzzard had found Sammy Jay in the far-away Old Pasture, and Sammy had moved back to the Green Forest that very day.

Such a good time as everybody did have! There were heaps and heaps of good things to eat. They danced by the light of the moon and played hide and seek. Finally Unc' Billy climbed up on a stump. He was dressed in his finest suit, and he wore his broadest grin.

Everybody crowded around to hear what Unc' Billy was about to say.

"Mah friends and neighbors," said Unc' Billy, "Ah have a great surprise fo' yo'all."

Then he stepped down, and everybody began to wonder and to guess what the surprise could be.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 24)*

## STORY 235. November 13, 1912.

### Unc' Billy Possum's Surprise

Everybody at Unc' Billy Possum's party was asking everybody else what the surprise could be which Unc' Billy had said he had for them. He had climbed up on a stump and told them that he had a surprise, and then he had scurried out of sight, and no one could find him. Just about that time Billy Mink remembered that the party had been given to meet a friend of Unc' Billy Possum, but no friend had appeared.

Billy Mink spoke of the matter to Little Joe Otter, and Little Joe Otter spoke of the matter to Jerry Muskrat, and Jerry Muskrat spoke of the matter to Sammy Jay, and right while he was speaking there came a shrill scream of "Thief! thief! thief!" from a thick hemlock-tree near by, and the voice was just like the voice of Sammy Jay.

Sammy Jay became greatly excited. "There!" he cried! "You heard that when you was standing right in front of me and talking to me, Jerry Muskrat. You know that I wasn't making a sound! I told you that I hadn't been screaming in the night, and this

proves it!”

Jerry Muskrat looked as if he couldn't believe his own ears. Just then the voice of Sticky-toes the Tree Toad began to croak “It's going to rain! It's going to rain! It's going to rain!” The voice seemed to come out of that very same hemlock tree. Everybody noticed it and looked up at the tree, and while they were all trying to see Sticky-toes, something dropped plo! right into their midst. It was Sticky-toes himself, and he had dropped from another tree altogether.

“You hear it!” he shrieked, dancing up and down he was so angry.

“You hear it! It isn't me, is it? That's my voice, yet it isn't mine, because I'm right here! How can I be here and over there too? Tell me that!”

No one could tell him, and Sticky-toes continued to scold and sputter and swell himself up with anger. But everybody forgot Sticky-toes when they heard the voice of Blacky the Crow calling “Caw, caw, caw!” from the very same hemlock tree. Now no one knew that Blacky the Crow had come to the party, for Blacky never goes abroad at night.

“Come out, Blacky!” they all shouted. But no Blacky appeared. Instead out of that magic hemlock tree poured a beautiful song, so beautiful that when it ended everybody clapped their hands. After that there was a perfect flood of music, as if all the singers of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows were in that hemlock tree. There was the song of Mr. Redwing and the song of Jenny Wren, and the sweet notes of Carol the Meadowlark and the beautiful happy song of Little-friend the Song Sparrow. No one had ever heard anything like it, and when it ended every one shouted for more. Even Sticky-toes the Tree Toad forgot his ill temper.

Instead of more music, out from the hemlock tree flew a stranger. He was about the size of Sammy Jay and wore a modest gray suit with white trimmings. He flew over to a tall stump in the moonlight, and no sooner had he alighted than up beside him scrambled Unc' Billy Possum. Unc' Billy wore his broadest grin.

“Mah friends of the Green Forest and the Green Meadows, Ah wants yo'all to know mah friend, Mistah Mocking-bird, who has come up from mah ol' home way down in ol' Virginy. He has the most wonderful voice in all the world, and when he wants to, he can make it sound just like the voice of any one of you'all. We-alls is right sorry fo' the trouble we-alls have made. It was all a joke, and now we asks yo' pahdon. Mah friend Mocker would like to stay here and live, if yo'all is willing,” said Unc' Billy.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 25)*

STORY 236. November 14, 1912.

## Mistah Mocking Bird Makes Himself at Home.

At first, when the little meadow and forest people were asked to pardon the tricks that Mr. Mocker and Unc' Billy Possum had played, a few were inclined not to. While

they were talking the matter over, Mistah Mocking Bird began to sing again that wonderful song of his. It was so beautiful that by the time it was ended, everyone was ready to grant the pardon. They crowded around him, and because he is good-natured, he made his voice sound just like the voice of each one who spoke to him. Of course they thought that was great fun, and by the time Unc' Billy Possum's moonlight party broke up, Mr. Mocker knew that he had made so many friends that he could stay in the Green Forest as long as he pleased.

But there were a lot of little people who were not at Unc' Billy Possum's party, because they go to bed instead of going out nights. Of course they heard all about the party the next morning and were very anxious indeed to see the stranger with the wonderful voice.

So Mr. Mocker went calling with Ol' Mistah Buzzard, and they visited all the little meadow and forest people who had not been at the party. Of course Mr. Mocker had to show off his wonderful voice to each one. When he had finished, he was tuckered out, was Mistah Mocking Bird, but he was happy, for now he had made friends and could live on the edge of the Green Forest with his old friends, Unc' Billy Possum and Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

So Mistah Mocking Bird soon made himself at home and, because he was happy, he would sing all day long. And sometimes, when the moon was shining, he woke up in the night and would sing for very joy. Now Peter Rabbit thought the newcomer's voice such a wonderful thing that he used to follow him around just to hear him fool others by making his voice sound like theirs. It was great fun. Peter and Mocker became great friends, and so when Peter heard it whispered around that Mistah Mocking Bird had not come by his wonderful voice honestly, he didn't believe a word of it and was very indignant. Of course he couldn't go to Mistah Mocking Bird himself and ask him, for he didn't want Mocker to know that such unkind things were being said. Finally he thought of Grandfather Frog, who is very old and very wise. "He'll know," said Peter, as off he posted to the Smiling Pool.

"If you please, Grandfather Frog, how does it happen that Mr. Mocker has such a wonderful voice and can make it sound like the voice of any one whom he hears?" asked Peter.

Now Grandfather Frog was feeling out of sorts that morning. He hadn't heard the whisper that Mr. Mocker had not come by his voice honestly, and he thought that Peter Rabbit was asking just to hear a story.

"Chugarum!" replied Grandfather Frog crossly. "Go ask Mr. Buzzard," And that was all that Peter could get out of him. So not knowing what else to do, off started Peter Rabbit to ask Ol' Mistah Buzzard where his friend Mr. Mocking Bird got such a wonderful voice.

*(The Adventures of Mr. Mocker, Chapter 26)*

## STORY 237. November 15, 1912.

### Ol' Mistah Buzzard Promises a Story.

“What’s that, Brer Rabbit? What’s that you want to know?” asked Ol’ Mistah Buzzard from his comfortable perch on the tall dead tree in the Green Forest where he delights to sit.

“I asked you how it is that your friend, Mistah Mocking Bird, happens to have such a wonderful voice. You come from the same country that he does, and because you are old I suppose you must know all about it,” said Peter Rabbit.

“Yo’ mustn’t suppose so much, Brer Rabbit! Yo’ mustn’t suppose so much! Supposing things gets people into a lot of trouble sometimes. Just because Ah am old isn’t any reason why Ah should know all about mah neighbors’ affairs. Ah never aim to inquire into their business, Brer Rabbit.

Yo’ business it am all yo’ own;  
Mah business it am mine.  
Just stop yo’ ears to things unkind  
And folks will like yo’ fine.

Peter Rabbit looked as if he felt just little bit foolish, for you know he is very curious and is forever poking his nose into other people’s affairs.

“I know it, Mistah Buzzard, I know it!” replied Peter. “But when you hear things whispered around and don’t know whether they are so or not, what are you going to do about it?”

“Just what Ah said, Brer Rabbit, just what I said! If they are unpleasant things just stop yo’ ears and don’t hear ‘em,” said Ol’ Mistah Buzzard.

“But if you can find out that the unpleasant things are not true you can sometimes stop them from being repeated. Isn’t that true, Mistah Buzzard?” asked Peter.

Ol’ Mistah Buzzard scratched his bald head and looked at Peter Rabbit thoughtfully. “Ah, reckon yo’ am right, Brer Rabbit,” he said after a while. “Yes, sah, Ah reckon yo’ am right. Now what is it yo’ all have got on yo’ mind about Brer Mocking Bird?”

Then Peter Rabbit told him how it was being whispered around through the Green Forest and over the Green Meadows that Mistah Mocking Bird had not come by his wonderful voice honestly, and that was why he had been singing in the night instead of in the day when everybody could see him.

At first old Mistah Buzzard was very indignant that any one should say such things or think such things about his old friend from way down in ol’ Virginy. Then he remembered all the trouble that had been caused by Mocker, when, just for a joke, he had kept in hiding and then had said unkind things, making his voice sound like the voices of other little people. When he thought of this Mistah Buzzard couldn’t much blame the little meadow and forest people for being suspicious of Mistah Mocking

Bird.

“Yo’ come back here tomorrow mo’ning and Ah’ll tell yo’ all about how Brer Mocking Bird comes by his wonderful voice,” said Ol’ Mistah Buzzard, sailing off into the air.

(Final paragraph used, in revised form, in *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*, chapter 12, “Why Mistah Mocker is the best loved of all the birds”)

## STORY 238. November 16, 1912.

### How Mistah Mocking Bird Came by His Voice.

Peter Rabbit can’t keep his tongue still. He simply can’t and that is all there is about it. If you want to keep a secret don’t tell it to Peter Rabbit. He means all right, does Peter. He doesn’t tell purposely. O, my, no! It just pops out before he thinks. He is always dreadfully sorry then when it is too late, but, of course, that doesn’t undo the mischief which sometimes has been done. Of course lots and lots of times no harm is done by Peter’s habit of talking. There was none this time. Ol’ Mistah Buzzard was surprised, bit there was no harm to anyone.

You see it was this way. Peter Rabbit had heard an ugly little whisper that Mistah Mocking Bird, who had just come to live in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows, had not come honestly by his wonderful voice. Peter had gone straight to Ol’ Mistah Buzzard and asked him about it. Ol’ Mistah Buzzard had told Peter to come back next morning and he should hear all about how Mistah Mocking Bird had come by his voice.

Peter was so tickled that he told everybody he met, and even went out of his way to tell some. Of course everybody wanted to hear all about it, and so when ol’ Mistah Buzzard came sailing down out of the sky to his favorite tall dead tree in the Green Forest that morning he found half the little people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest gathered there.

“Once upon a time,” began ol’ Mistah Buzzard, “all the birds who make their homes up in the No’th had come down South to get warm, just like most of them do now every Winter. But somehow they were late starting, and the first thing they knew there was ol’ Jack Frost a-blowing his trumpet and a-twisting the leaves off all the trees. Away they all started, a-crowding each other, just as if there wasn’t room enough in the air for all of ‘em. But it wasn’t any use, fo’ right on their tail feathers rode ol’ Jack Frost.

“Of course, every one of them had a cold when they reached mah ol’ home ‘way down South. Couldn’t any one of ‘em sing a note, they had such sore th’oats. Now, old Mother Nature used to get all the birds together every year soon after they reached the warm and sunny South for a grand concert, to see if they had been studying their music as they should, and had been taking care of their th’oats as they ought to. This time they hadn’t much more’n shaken ol’ Jack Frost offen their tail feathers when old

Illustrations. November 11 to November 16, 1912.



233. Unc' Billy Possum Thinks it Over



234. Unc' Billy Possum Gives a Party



235. Unc' Billy Possum's Surprise



236. Mistah Mocking Bird Makes Himself at Home



237. Ol' Mistah Buzzard Promises a Story



238. Ol' Mistah Buzzard Promises a Story

Mother Nature sent word that she was all ready for the grand concert.

“Yo’ never did see such a sick-looking lot of birds in all yo’ born days. Here they couldn’t sing a note, and they hadn’t any real good excuse to offer old Mother Nature, because they know that they ought to have started South before they did. About this time along comes a no-account-looking bird, what made his home in the South, and never did go far away from it. He wasn’t pretty.

“He wore a common, every-day sort of suit of gray and white, and nobody ever did pay much attention to him. They didn’t then until he came up bashful like and offered to sing Mistah Meadow Lark’s solo fo’ him in the grand concert.

“Mistah Meadow Lark would have laughed only his th’oat was too sore. But this no-account looking bird just opened his mouth and out poured Mistah Meadow Lark’s song, sure enough. It seems he had sat around and listened and listened every Winter when Mistah Meadow Lark came back South until he could sing that song just as good as Mistah Meadow Lark hisself, and it was the same way with Mistah Cardinal and Mistah Redwing, and a whole lot more

“Well, when the time for the grand concert came this little no-account bird hid in a thick tree and sang for Mistah Meadow Lark and all the others. But yo’ can’t fool ol’ Mother Nature and its of no use to try. Her eyes twinkled as she called this po’ little no-account bird out before all the other birds and asked him why he had done it. He just hung his head and said: ‘Cause Ah didn’t want they-all’s to get in trouble.”

Then ol’ Mother, Nature gave him a new name, and said that he should have the most wonderful voice in all the world, and he should be known as Mistah Mocking Bird. And it was just as ol’ Mother Nature said. And ol’ Mistah Mocking Bird’s wonderful voice was handed down to his children and from them to their children and so on. And that is how mah friend Mocker, whom yo all know, came by his wonderful voice.”

(Extensively revised for *Mother West Wind’s Neighbors*, chapter 12, “Why Mistah Mocker is the best loved of all the birds”)

## STORY 239. November 18, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Grows Curious Again.

Oh, that curiosity of Peter Rabbit! Was there ever anything like it? It gave Peter no peace at all. No sooner had he found out about one thing than he was just bubbling over with desire to know about something else. It got him into all kinds of trouble. There was a time that he found a queer-looking box sitting just outside one of his runways. It had a door and the door was open in a most inviting way. Inside, way in the back, was a bit of carrot fastened to a stick. It was a queer place for a carrot to be. Peter didn’t want it, not the least little bit, for his stomach was full. But he was curious about that bit of carrot. It looked like real carrot, but who ever heard of carrot in such a place as that? He must find out if it was real carrot.



So Peter stole inside the box with the inviting door and nibbled the carrot just out of curiosity and nothing more. Bang! The door had closed, and do what he would, Peter could not open it. So all day he had sat in the dark in a miserable little heap, so frightened that he could hardly breathe with any comfort. Then he had heard heavy footsteps coming nearer and nearer and he had shivered and shaken with fright. Nearer they came. Something hit the box and knocked it over and broke the fast-closed door so that Peter was able to crawl out. Peter had dodged into the old brier patch, where he felt safe. Pretty soon his curiosity had led him to peep out. There lay the box in which he had been caught, and Peter knew then it was a trap. And there was one of Farmer Brown's cows, which had accidentally kicked the trap over and so set Peter free. Ever since then Peter has had a warm place in his heart for cows.

Then there was the time Peter had seen Reddy Fox carefully bury something in a sand spot out on the Green Meadows. Of course, it didn't concern Peter in the least. It was none of Peter's business what Reddy Fox might choose to bury out on the Green Meadows. But Peter couldn't rest until he had found out. So no sooner was Reddy Fox out of sight than away went Peter Rabbit, lipperty- lipperty-lip, straight over to where Reddy had been at work. It was a long way from the safe old brier patch, and Peter should have known better than to run such a risk. Hardly had he reached the spot where Reddy Fox had been at work than, happening to look up, whom should he see but old Granny Fox stealing up to him through the grass. Peter forgot all his curiosity. He just started for the old brier patch as fast as his long legs would take him, and it seemed to him that with every jump he could feel the claws of old Granny Fox on the white patch on the seat of his trousers.

But Peter never seemed to learn, and was just as curious as ever. As soon as his curiosity was satisfied about one thing there was something else he just had to know about. Ol' Mistah Buzzard had no sooner finished telling how Mistah Mocking Bird had come by his wonderful voice than Peter was all ready with another question.

"If yo' please, Mistah Buzzard, will you tell us why your head is red?" asked Peter Rabbit.

## STORY 240. November 19, 1912.

### Why Ol' Mistah Buzzard has a Red Head.

Peter Rabbit had asked Ol' Mistah Buzzard to please tell him why he had a red head. Ol' Mistah Buzzard had cleared his throat as if he was going to begin a long story, then he had coughed once or twice, and finally he told Peter that he would think about it and to come the next day. So the next day Peter was on hand and with him were Johnny Chuck and Jimmy Skunk and Striped Chipmunk and Danny Meadow Mouse and Billy Mink and Happy Jack Squirrel and a lot more of the little meadow and forest people, for Peter Rabbit had passed the word along that Ol' Mistah Buzzard was going to tell a story and no one wanted to miss it.

"Once upon a time," began Ol' Mistah Buzzard, "a long time ago, a very long time ago, ol' Granpap Buzzard was sitting by hisself on a tall dead pine tree way down souf.

Granpap Buzzard was feeling mighty pert. Yes, sah, he sho'ly was feeling mighty pert. Yo' see, he had beaten ol' King Eagle flying. He had flown out of sight straight up in the sky and had gone so high that the sun had burned all the feathers off his head, had Granpap Buzzard. So in spite of his sore head Granpap Buzzard was feeling mighty pleased with hisself. He chuckled as he thought how plumb foolish ol' King Eagle had looked.

“He was still chuckling when he noticed a great fuss over on the edge of the woods. He could hear ol' King Eagle a-screaming, and he knew by the sound that ol' King Eagle was feeling powerful put out about something. So Granpap Buzzard just spread his wings and sailed over to see what it all meant. When he got there he found that ol' King Eagle was feeling mean, just as mean as pisen, and he was a letting some of it out on poor li'l' Mistah Sparrer Hawk, because Mistah Sparrer Hawk had laughed at ol' King Eagle when he lost the race to Granpap Buzzard.

“Now, Granpap Buzzard had long claws and a hooked bill just like Ah has mah own self, but they never were meant fo' fighting like ol' King Eagle's. But Granpap Buzzard, he didn't stop to think about that! No, sah, he wasn't letting a little thing like that bother him none. Because why? Because his dander had riz when he saw po' li'l' Mistah Sparrer Hawk being knocked aroun' by ol' King Eagle.

“So Granpap Buzzard didn't wait fo' to pass the time of day, but jes' jumped right in. Mah goodness sakes alive! Ah spects that it was one of the worst mixups ever was seen! They hammered each other with their wings and they scratched each other with their claws and they pulled the feathers outen each other with their bills.

“Li'l' Mistah Sparrer Hawk, he jes' crawled plumb out of sight in a holler tree, where he was safe. Now Ol' Granpap Buzzard never did believe in foolishness, nohow. All the time he was a-clawing and a-pounding ol' King Eagle he was keeping one eye on li'l' Mistah Sparrer Hawk, and as soon as he was safe in the holler tree Granpap took the first chance to break away and fly off.

“Ol' King Eagle, he screamed: ‘Coward! Coward! just like that, because Granpap wouldn't stay and fight. But Granpap Buzzard didn't have any quarrel with ol' King Eagle now that li'l' Mistah Sparrer Hawk was safe, so he just let ol' King Eagle enjoy himself a-hollering.

“When Granpap Buzzard got back to his ol' dead tree he found his po' head. which had been very tender where Mr. Sun burned the feathers off when he beat ol' King Eagle in the race up into the sky, had been so scratched and clawed in the fight that it was bleeding so that it was all red. Long comes ol' Mother Nature jes' then and she say:

‘Mistah Buzzard Ah am going to give yo' a red head, and yo' chillen shall have red heads jes' to shame ol' King Eagle and his chillen fo' bullying po' li'l' Mistah Sparrer Hawk.’

“And that is how Ah comes to have a red head,” concluded ol' Mistah Buzzard proudly.

## STORY 241. November 20, 1912.

### Why Ol' Mistah Buzzard's Cousin has a Black Head

Ol' Mistah Buzzard had just told the story of how it happens that he has a red head. His friend, Unc' Billy Possum, came along just in time to hear the end of it.

“Did Ah understand yo' all to say that all Buzzards have red heads?” inquired Unc' Billy.

Ol' Mistah Buzzard looked down at Unc' Billy and he saw a twinkle in Unc' Billy's eyes. “Ah knows jes' what yo' have got on yo' mind, Brer Possum. It's that trifling, no'count cousin of mine. He's a Buzzard jes' like Ah am, but he belongs to a different branch of the family. He has a black head, he has, and that's because his granpap was trifling and po' trash, jes' like he is.”

Peter Rabbit pricked up his ears. That sounded like a story. Anyway, he was curious about that black-headed cousin of Ol' Mistah Buzzard.

“How does yo' cousin come to have a black head?” inquired Peter Rabbit.

“Because his granpap asked too many questions,” replied ol' Mistah Buzzard, shortly.

Everybody laughed and Peter Rabbit looked foolish, for no one asks more questions than Peter Rabbit. Peter laughed with the others, but kept right on asking for the story. Finally Ol' Mistah Buzzard grinned good naturedly and began.

“Way back in the days when Granpap Buzzard had his li'l falling out with ol' King Eagle, all on account of po' li'l Mistah Sparrer Hawk,” said ol' Mistah Buzzard, “his cousin used to go about making a nuisance of hisself by poking his nose into everybody's business. Wasn't anything going on that this trifling member of the Buzzard family didn't know about and meddle in. He could ask mo questions than Peter Rabbit can now, and he jes' went aroun' from mo-ning till night asking questions.

“One day he had been warming his toes on the top of a chimney where he hadn't ever been befo'. Of course, he was right smart curious to know who lived there and what they did. He could hear somebody talking to theirselves, and he just stretched his head as far down the chimney as he could and listened and listened. It wasn't any use. All he could hear was jest a mumbling. Of course, that made him more curious than ever and it seemed to him he must go plumb outen his head 'less he could hear what was going on down inside that li'l ol' house.

“He stretched his head and neck so far down the chimney that he got 'em all black with soot, but he didn't mind that. Yo' see, he didn't notice it at all. Pretty soon he plumb forgot where he was or that he was listening where he had no business to be.

“Will yo' all please speak a li'l louder!” he hollers down the chimney, jes' like that.

“Now, the 'li'l ol' woman who lived by herself in that li'l ol' house hadn't seen

Granpap Buzzard's cousin light on the chimney, and when she heard that voice coming right outen the fireplace she was scared. Yes, sah, she was plumb scared, and she tipped over a whole kettleful of soup in the fire. Of course it made a terrible mess, and a powerful lot of smoke and ashes flew up the chimney. They like to have choked that Buzzard to death, and they did cover him from head to feet.

“When he got home he tried to brush the soot and black off, but it wouldn't brush off. And from that day on he never spoke 'less he was spoken to, and his head was black. And his chil'en and his chil'en's chil'en have been jes' like him. Now yo' know why mah cousin who lives down souf has a black head,” concluded ol' Mistah Buzzard.

STORY 242. November 21, 1912.

## Happy Jack Drops a Nut

Happy Jack Squirrel sat on the tip of one of the highest branches of a big hickory tree. Happy Jack was up very early that morning. In fact, jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was still in his bed behind the Purple Hills when Happy Jack hopped briskly out of bed. He washed himself thoroughly and was ready for business by the time Mr. Sun began his climb up in the blue, blue sky.

You see, Happy Jack had found that big hickory tree just loaded with nuts all ripe and ready to gather. He was quite sure that no one else had found that special tree, and he wanted to get all the nuts before anyone else found out about them. So he was all ready and off he raced to the big tree just as soon as it was light enough to see.

“The nuts that grow in the hickory tree—  
They're all for me! They're all for me!”  
And when the ground is covered with snow  
These nuts will keep me from hunger, you know.

Happy Jack was humming that little song as he rested for a few minutes way up in the top of the tree and wondered if his storehouse would hold all these big, fat nuts. Just then he heard a great scolding a little way over in the Green Forest. Happy Jack stopped humming and listened. He knew that voice. It was his cousin's voice—the voice of Chatterer the Red Squirrel. Happy Jack frowned. “I hope he won't come over this way,” muttered Happy Jack. He does not love his cousin Chatterer anyway, and then there was the big tree full of hickory nuts! He didn't want Chatterer to find that.

I am afraid that Happy Jack was selfish. There were more nuts than he could possibly eat in one winter, and yet he wasn't willing that his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, should have a single one. Now Chatterer is short-tempered and a great scold. Someone or something had upset him this morning, and he was scolding as fast as his tongue could go, as he came running right towards the tree in which Happy Jack was sitting. Happy Jack sat perfectly still and watched. He didn't move so much as the tip of his big gray tail. Would Chatterer go past and not see that big tree full of nuts? It looked very much as if he would, for he was so busy scolding that he wasn't paying

much attention to other things.

Happy Jack smiled as Chatterer came running under the tree without once looking up. He was so tickled that he started to hug himself and didn't remember that he was holding a big, fat nut in his hands. Of course, he dropped it. Where do you think it went? Well, sir, it fell straight down, from the top of that tall tree, and it landed right on the head of Chatterer the Red Squirrel!

"My stars!" cried Chatterer, stopping his scolding and his running together, and rubbing his head where the nut had hit him. Then he looked up to see where it had come from. Of course, he looked straight up at Happy Jack.

"You did that purposely!" screamed Chatterer, his short temper flaring up.

"I didn't!" snapped Happy Jack.

"You did!"

"I didn't!"

Oh, dear, oh, dear, such a sight! Two little Squirrels, one in a gray suit and one in a red suit, contradicting each other and calling names! It was such a sad, sad sight, for you know they were cousins.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 1)*

## STORY 243. November 22, 1912.

### The Quarrel.

Two angry little people were making a dreadful noise in the Green Forest. It was a beautiful morning, a very beautiful morning, but all the beauty of it was being spoiled by the dreadful noise these two little people. You see they were quarreling. Yes, sir, they were quarreling, and it wasn't at all nice to see or nice to hear.

You know who they were. Why, one was Happy Jack Squirrel, who wears a coat of gray, and the other was Chatterer the Red Squirrel, who always wears a red coat with vest of white. Happy Jack had dropped that nut from the tiptop of the tall hickory tree and it had landed right on top of Chatterer's head. Of course, Chatterer had looked up to see where the nut had come from, and, of course, he had seen Happy Jack, and had thought right away that Happy Jack had dropped the nut on him purposely.

Now it really had been an accident, for all the time Happy Jack had been sitting as still as still could be, hoping that his cousin Chatterer would pass by without looking up and so seeing the big fat nuts in the top of that tree, for Happy Jack was greedy and wanted all of them himself. Now Chatterer the Red Squirrel has a sharp temper, and also he has sharp eyes. All the time he was scolding Happy Jack and calling him names Chatterer's bright eyes were taking note of all those big, fat hickory-nuts and his mouth began to water. Without wasting any more time he started up the tree to get some. Happy Jack grew very angry, very angry indeed. He hurried down to meet Chatterer the Red Squirrel and to prevent him climbing the tree.

“You keep out of this tree; it’s mine!” he shouted.

“No such thing! You don’t own the tree and I’ve got just as much right here as you have!” screamed Chatterer, dodging around to the other side of the tree.

“Tis, too, mine! I found it first!” shouted Happy Jack. “You’re a thief, so there!”

“I’m not!”

“You are!”

“You’re a pig, Happy Jack; just a great big pig!”

“I’m not a pig! I found these nuts first, and I tell you they’re mine!” shrieked Happy Jack, so angry that every time he spoke, he jerked his tail. And all the time he was chasing round and round the trunk of the tree trying to prevent Chatterer getting up.

Now, Happy Jack is ever so much bigger than his cousin Chatterer but he isn’t as spry, and, in spite of him Chatterer got past, and, like a little red flash, was up in the top of the tree where the big, fat nuts were. But he didn’t have time to pick even one, for after him came Happy Jack so angry that Chatterer knew that he would fare badly if Happy Jack should catch him. Round and round, over and across, this way and that way, in the top of the tall hickory tree raced Chatterer the Red Squirrel with his cousin, Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel, right at his heels, and calling him everything bad to be thought of. Yes, indeed it was truly dreadful, and Peter Rabbit, who happened along just then, put his hands over his ears so as not to hear such a dreadful quarrel.

*(Happy Jack, chapter 2)*

## STORY 244. November 23, 1912.

### Striped Chipmunk is Kept very Busy

Striped Chipmunk was sitting just inside a hollow log, studying about how he could fill up his new storehouse for the winter. Striped Chipmunk is very thrifty. He likes to play, and he is one of the merriest of all the little people who live on the Green Meadows or in the Green Forest. He lives right on the edge of both and knows everybody, and everybody knows him. Almost every morning the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind hurry over to have a frolic with him the very first thing. But though he dearly loves to play, he never lets play interfere with work. Whatever he does, be it play or work, he does with all his might.

I love the sun; I love the rain;  
I love to work; I love to play.  
Whatever it may bring to me  
I love each minute of each day.

So said Striped Chipmunk, as he sat in the hollow log and studied how he could fill that splendid big new storehouse. Pretty soon he pricked up his funny little ears. What was all that noise over in the Green Forest? Striped Chipmunk peeped out of the hollow

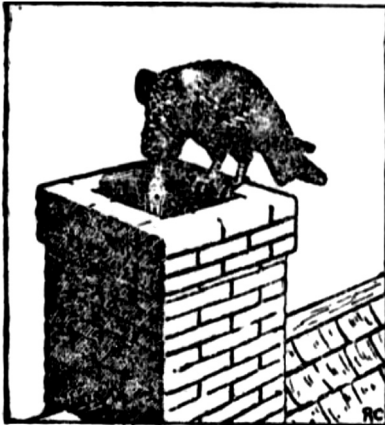
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239. Peter Rabbit Grows Curious Again



240. Why Ol' Mistah Buzzard Has a Red Head



241. Why Ol' Mistah Buzzard's Cousin Has a Black Head



242. Happy Jack Squirrel Drops a Nut



243. The Quarrel



244. Striped Chipmunk is Kept Very Busy

log. Over in the top of a tall hickory tree there was a terrible fuss going on. Striped Chipmunk listened. He heard angry voices. Such angry voices! They were the voices of his big cousins, Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel and Chatterer the Red Squirrel.

“Dear me! Dear me! How those two do quarrel! I must go over and see what it is all about,” thought Striped Chipmunk.

So, with a flirt of his funny, little tail, he scampered out of the hollow log and over to the tall hickory tree. He knew all about that tree. Many, many times he had looked up at the big fat nuts in the top of it, watching them grow bigger and fatter, and hoping that when they grew ripe, Old Mother West Wind would find time to shake them down to him. You know Striped Chipmunk is not much of a climber, and so he cannot go up and pick the nuts as his big cousins, Happy Jack and Chatterer do.

When he reached the tall hickory tree, what do you think was happening? Why, those big, fat nuts were rattling down to the ground on every side, just as if Old Mother West Wind was shaking the tree as hard as she could. But Old Mother West Wind wasn't there at all. No, Sir, there wasn't even one of the Merry Little Breezes up in the treetops. The big fat nuts were rattling down just on account of the dreadful quarrel of Striped Chipmunk's two foolish cousins, Happy Jack and Chatterer.

You see, Happy Jack was greedy. He had found the tree and though there were more nuts than he could ever, ever use himself, he wanted all of them. When his cousin Chatterer came along and wanted some Happy Jack had said that he couldn't have any. Then they had begun the quarrel and called each other dreadful names. Chatterer had climbed the tree, and now Happy Jack, who is bigger but not so spry, was chasing Chatterer round and round and over the treetop, and both were so angry that they didn't once notice that they were knocking down the very nuts over which they were quarreling.

Striped Chipmunk didn't stop to listen to the quarrel. No, sir-ee! He stuffed a big fat nut in each pocket in his cheek and scampered back to his splendid new storehouse as fast as his little legs would take him. Back and forth, back and forth, scampered Striped Chipmunk, and all the time he was laughing inside and hoping his big cousins would keep right on quarreling.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 3)*

## STORY 245. November 25, 1912

### Happy Jack and Chatterer Feel Foolish

Happy Jack and Chatterer were out of breath. Happy Jack was puffing and blowing, for he is big and fat, and it is not so easy for him to race about in the tree-tops as it is for his smaller, slim, nimble cousin, Chatterer. So Happy Jack was the first to stop. He sat on a branch 'way up in the top of the tall hickory tree and glared across at Chatterer, who sat on a branch on the other side of the tall hickory.

“Couldn't catch me, could you, smarty?” taunted Chatterer.



“You just wait until I do! I’ll make you sorry you ever came near my hickory tree,” snapped Happy Jack.

“I’m waiting. Besides, it isn’t your tree any more than it’s mine,” replied Chatterer, and made a face at Happy Jack.

Happy Jack hopped up as if he meant to begin the chase again, but he had a pain in his side from running so hard and so long, and so he sat down again. Right down in his heart Happy Jack knew that Chatterer was right, that the tree didn’t belong to him any more than to his cousin. But when he thought of all those big, fat nuts with which the tall hickory tree had been loaded, greedy thoughts chased out all thoughts of right and he said to himself again, as he had said when he first saw his cousin, that Chatterer shouldn’t have one of them. He stopped scolding long enough to steal a look at them, and then—what do you think Happy Jack did? Why, he gave such a jump of surprise that he nearly lost his balance. Not a nut was to be seen!

Happy Jack blinked. Then, he rubbed his eyes and looked again. He couldn’t see a nut anywhere! There were the husks in which the nuts had grown big and fat until they were ripe, but now every husk was empty.

Chatterer saw the queer look on Happy Jack’s face, and he looked too. Now Chatterer the Red Squirrel had very quick wits, and he guessed right away what had happened. He knew that while they had been quarreling and Happy Jack had been chasing him round and round and over the top of the tall hickory tree, they must have knocked down all the nuts, which were just ready to fall anyway. Like a little red flash, Chatterer started down the tree. Then Happy Jack guessed too, and down he started as fast as he could go, crying, “Stop, thief!” all the way.

When he reached the ground, there was Chatterer scurrying around and poking under the fallen leaves, but he hadn’t found a single nut. Happy Jack couldn’t stop to quarrel any more, because you see he was afraid that Chatterer would find the biggest and fattest nuts. So he began to scurry around and hunt too. It was queer, very queer, how those nuts could have hidden so! They hunted and hunted, but no nuts were to be found. Then they stopped and stared up at the top of the tall hickory tree. Not a nut could they see. Then they stared at each other, and gradually a foolish, a very foolish look crept over each face.

“Where—where do you suppose they have gone?” asked Happy Jack in a queer-sounding voice.

Just then they heard someone laughing fit to kill himself. It was Peter Rabbit.

“Did you take our nuts?” they both shouted angrily.

“No,” replied Peter, “no, I didn’t take them, though they were not yours, anyway!” And then he went off into another fit of laughter, for Peter had seen Striped Chipmunk very hard at work taking away those very nuts while his two big cousins had been quarreling in the tree top.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 4)*

STORY 246. November 26, 1912.

## Happy Jack Suspects Striped Chipmunk

Happy Jack didn't look a bit happy. Indeed, Happy Jack looked very unhappy. You see, he looked just as he felt. He had set his heart on having all the big, fat nuts that he had found in the top of that tall hickory tree, and now, instead of having all of them, he hadn't any of them. Worse still, he knew right down in his heart that it was his own fault. He had been too greedy to let his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, have a few. While they had quarreled in the top of the tall hickory tree they had knocked all the nuts down, and then when they went down to hunt for them not a nut was to be found.

Happy Jack was studying about this as he sat with his back against a big chestnut tree. He remembered how hard Peter Rabbit had laughed when Happy Jack and his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, had been so surprised because they could not find the nuts they had knocked down. Peter hadn't taken them, for Peter has no use for them, but he must know what had become of them, for he was still laughing as he had gone off down the Lone Little Path. While he was thinking of all this, Happy Jack's bright eyes had been wide open, as they usually are, so that no danger should come near. Suddenly they saw something moving among the brown and yellow leaves on the ground. Happy Jack looked sharply, and then a sudden thought popped into his head.

"Hi, there, Cousin Chipmunk!" he shouted.

"Hi, there, your own self!" replied Striped Chipmunk, for it was he.

"What are you doing down there?" asked Happy Jack.

"Looking for hickory nuts," replied Striped Chipmunk, and his eyes twinkled as he said it, for there wasn't a hickory tree near.

Happy Jack looked hard at Striped Chipmunk, for that sudden thought which had popped into his head when he first saw Striped Chipmunk was growing into a strong, a very strong, suspicion that Striped Chipmunk knew something about those lost hickory nuts. But Striped Chipmunk looked back at him so innocently that Happy Jack didn't know just what to think.

"Have you begun to fill your storehouse for winter yet?" inquired Happy Jack.

"Of course I have. I don't mean to let Jack Frost catch me with an empty storehouse," replied Striped Chipmunk.

When leaves turn yellow, brown, and red,  
And nuts come pitter, patter down;  
When days are short and swiftly sped,  
And Autumn wears her colored gown,  
I'm up before old Mr. Sun  
His nightcap has a chance to doff,  
And have my day's work well begun  
When others kick their bedclothes off."

“What are you filling your storehouse with?” asked Happy Jack, trying not to show too much interest.

“Corn, nice ripe yellow corn, and seeds and acorns and chestnuts,” answered Striped Chipmunk. “And now I’m looking for some big, fat hickory nuts,” he added, and his bright eyes twinkled. “Have you seen any, Happy Jack?”

Happy Jack said that he hadn’t seen any, and Striped Chipmunk remarked that he couldn’t waste any more time talking if he wanted to fill his storehouse, and scurried away. Happy Jack watched him go, a puzzled little frown puckering up his brows.

“I believe he knows something about those nuts. I think I’ll follow him and have a peep into his storehouse,” he muttered.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 5)*

## STORY 247. November 27, 1912.

### Happy Jack Spies on Striped Chipmunk.

Now you see me; now you don’t,  
Fiddle, fuddle, faddle fee!  
Mighty spy you’ll have to move  
If you keep your eyes on me.

Striped Chipmunk was whisking about among the brown and yellow leaves that covered the ground on the edge of the Green Forest. He is such a little fellow that he looked almost like a brown leaf himself, and when one of Old Mother West Wind’s Merry Little Breezes whirled the brown leaves in a mad little dance around him, it was the hardest work in the world to see Striped Chipmunk at all. Anyway, Happy Jack Squirrel found it so.

You see, Happy Jack was spying on Striped Chipmunk. Yes, sir, Happy Jack was spying. Spying, you know, is watching other people secretly and trying to find out what they are doing without letting them know anything about it. It isn’t a nice thing to do, not a bit nice. Happy Jack knew it, and all the time he was doing it, he was feeling very much ashamed of himself. But he said to himself that he just had to know where Striped Chipmunk’s storehouse was, because he just had to peep inside and find out if it had any of the big, fat hickory nuts that had disappeared from under the tall hickory tree while he was quarreling up in the top of it with his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel.

But spying on Striped Chipmunk isn’t the easiest thing in the world. Happy Jack was finding it the hardest work he had ever undertaken. Striped Chipmunk is so spry, and whisks about so, that you need eyes all around your head to keep track of him. Happy Jack found that his two eyes, bright and quick as they are, couldn’t keep that little elf of a cousin of his always in sight. Every few minutes he would disappear and then bob up again in the most unexpected place and most provoking way.

Now I’m here, and now I’m there!

Now I am not anywhere!  
Watch me now, for here I go  
Out of sight! I told you so!

With the last words, Striped Chipmunk was nowhere to be seen. It seemed as if the earth must have opened and swallowed him. But it hadn't, for two minutes later Happy Jack saw him flirting his funny little tail in the sauciest way as he scampered along an old log.

Happy Jack began to suspect that Striped Chipmunk was just having fun with him. What else could he mean by saying such things? And yet Happy Jack was sure that Striped Chipmunk hadn't seen him, for, all the time he was watching, Happy Jack had taken the greatest care to keep hidden himself. No, it couldn't be, it just couldn't be that Striped Chipmunk knew that he was anywhere about. He would just be patient a little longer, and he would surely see that smart little cousin of his go to his storehouse. So Happy Jack waited and watched.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 6)*

STORY 248. November 28, 1912.

## Striped Chipmunk has Fun with Happy Jack

Hipperty, hopperty, one, two, three!  
What do you think becomes of me?

Striped Chipmunk would shout in his shrillest voice. Then he would vanish from sight all in the wink of an eye. You couldn't tell where he went to. At least Happy Jack couldn't, and his eyes are sharper than yours or mine. Happy Jack was spying. He was watching Striped Chipmunk without letting Striped Chipmunk know it. At least he thought he was. But really he wasn't. Those sharp twinkling eyes of Striped Chipmunk see everything. You know, he is such a very little fellow that he has to be very wide awake to keep out of danger.

And he is wide awake. Oh, my, yes, indeed! When he is awake, and that is every minute of the day, he is the widest awake little fellow you ever did see. He had seen Happy Jack the very first thing, and he had guessed right away that Happy Jack was spying on him so as to find out if he had any of the big, fat hickory nuts that Happy Jack had knocked down from the tall hickory tree when he had quarreled with his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, in the top of it. Now Striped Chipmunk had all of those fat hickory nuts safely hidden in his splendid new storehouse, but he didn't intend to let Happy Jack know it. So he just pretended not to see Happy Jack, or to know that he was anywhere near, but acted as if he was just going about his own business. Really he was just having the best time ever fooling Happy Jack.

The corn is ripe; the nuts do fall;  
Acorns are sweet and plump.  
I soon will have my storehouse full  
Inside the hollow stump."

Striped Chipmunk sang this just as if no one was anywhere near, and he was singing just for joy. Of course Happy Jack heard it and he grinned to himself.

“So your storehouse is in a hollow stump, my smart little cousin!” said Happy Jack to himself. “If that’s the case, I’ll soon find it.”

Striped Chipmunk scurried along, and now he took pains to always keep in sight. Happy Jack followed, hiding behind the trees. Pretty soon Striped Chipmunk picked up a plump acorn and put it in the pocket of his right cheek. Then he picked up another and put that in the pocket in his left cheek. Then he crowded another into each; and his face was swelled so that you would hardly have guessed that it was Striped Chipmunk if you had chanced to meet him. My, my, he was a funny sight! Happy Jack grinned again as he watched, partly because Striped Chipmunk looked so funny, and partly because he knew that if Striped Chipmunk was going to eat the acorns right away, he wouldn’t stuff them into the pockets in his cheeks. But he had done this very thing, and so he must be going to take them to his storehouse.

Off scampered Striped Chipmunk, and after him stole Happy Jack, his eyes shining with excitement. Pretty soon he saw an old stump which looked as if it must be hollow. Happy Jack grinned more than ever as he carefully hid himself and watched. Striped Chipmunk scrambled up on the old stump, looked this way and that way, as if to be sure that no one was watching him, then with a flirt of his funny little tail he darted into a little round doorway. He was gone a long time, but by and by out he popped, looked this way and that way, and then scampered off in the direction from which he had come. Happy Jack didn’t try to follow him. He waited until he was sure that Striped Chipmunk was out of sight and hearing, and then he walked over to the old stump.

“It’s his storehouse fast enough,” said Happy Jack.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 7)*

## STORY 249. November 29, 1912.

### Happy Jack Turns Burglar

Happy Jack Squirrel stood in front of the old stump into which he had seen Striped Chipmunk go with the pockets in his cheeks full of acorns, and out of which he had come with the pockets of his cheeks quite empty.

“It certainly is his storehouse, and now I’ll find out if he is the one who got all those big, fat nuts from under the tall hickory tree,” muttered Happy Jack.

First he looked this way, and then he looked that way, to be sure that no one saw him, for what he was planning to do was a very dreadful thing, and he knew it. Happy Jack was going to turn burglar. A burglar, you know, is one who breaks into another’s house or barn to steal, which is a very, very dreadful thing to do. Yet this is just what Happy Jack Squirrel was planning to do. He was going to get into that old stump, and if those big, fat hickory nuts were there, as he was sure they were, he was going to take them. He tried very hard to make himself believe that it wouldn’t be stealing. He had

watched those nuts in the top of the tall hickory tree so long that he had grown to think that they belonged to him. Of course they didn't, but he had made himself think they did.

So when Chatterer the Red Squirrel had come along and wanted some Happy Jack had tried to chase him out of the tall hickory tree and between them they had knocked down all the nuts. When they had stopped quarreling and hurried down to the ground not a nut was to be found. Someone else had got every one of them.

Happy Jack had suspected that it was his small cousin, Striped Chipmunk, and had secretly followed Striped Chipmunk to this old stump, which he was sure must be his cousin's storehouse.

Happy Jack walked all around the old stump, and then he climbed up on top of it. There was only one doorway, and that was the little round hole through which Striped Chipmunk had entered and then come out. It was too small for Happy Jack to even get his head through, though his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel, who is much smaller, could have slipped in easily. Happy Jack sniffed and sniffed. He could smell nuts and corn and other good things. My, how good they did smell! His eyes shone greedily.

Happy Jack took one more hasty look around to see that no one was looking, then with his long sharp teeth he began to make the doorway larger. The wood was tough, but Happy Jack worked with might and main, for he wanted to get those nuts and get away before Striped Chipmunk should return, or anyone else should happen along and see him. Soon the hole was big enough for him to get his head inside. It was a storehouse, sure enough. Happy Jack worked harder than ever, and soon the hole was large enough for him to get wholly inside.

What a sight! There was corn and there were chestnuts and acorns and a few hickory nuts, though these did not look so big and fat as the ones Happy Jack was looking for. Happy Jack chuckled to himself, a wicked, greedy chuckle, as he looked. And then something happened.

“Oh! Oh! Stop it! Leave me alone!” yelled Happy Jack.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 8)*

STORY 250. November 30, 1912.

## Happy Jack Squirrel's Sad Mistake

“Let me go! Let me go!” yelled Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel, as he backed out of the hollow stump where he had just found a wonderful supply of good things to eat, things which belonged to someone else, but which Happy Jack had intended to help himself to. He had back out faster than he had gone in, a great deal faster. Can you guess why? I'll tell you. It was because he was being pulled out. Yes, Sir, Happy Jack Squirrel was being pulled out by his big, bushy tail.

Happy Jack was more frightened than hurt. To be sure, it is not at all comfortable to have one's tail pulled, but Happy Jack wouldn't have minded this so much had it not

Illustrations. November 25 to November 30, 1912.



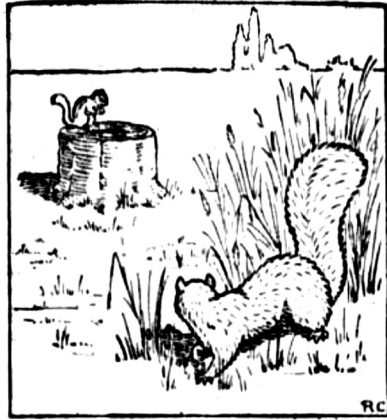
245. Happy Jack and Chatterer Feel Foolish



246. Happy Jack Suspects Striped Chipmunk



247. Happy Jack Spies on Striped Chipmunk



248. Striped Chipmunk Has More Fun with Happy Jack



249. Happy Jack Squirrel Turns Burglar



250. Happy Jack's Squirrel's Sad Mistake

been so unexpected, or if he could have seen who was pulling it. And then, right inside Happy Jack didn't feel a bit good. Why? Well, because he was doing a dreadful thing, and he knew that it was a dreadful thing. He had broken into somebody's storehouse to steal. He was sure that it was Striped Chipmunk's storehouse, and he wouldn't admit to himself that he was going to steal, actually steal. But all the time, right down deep in his heart, he knew that if he took any of those hickory nuts it would be stealing.

You see, it was like this: Happy Jack had quarreled with his cousin over some big, fat, hickory nuts and while they were quarreling the nuts had disappeared. Happy Jack had suspected his little cousin, Striped Chipmunk, of taking them away, and he had followed Striped Chipmunk to his hollow stump. Now, of course, Striped Chipmunk had a perfect right to these nuts if he found them on the ground, but Happy Jack had tried to make himself believe that because he had found them first in the tree top they belonged to him and he had broken into the old stump to get them.

But Happy Jack had been careless. When he had made the doorway big enough for him to crawl inside, he had left his tail hanging outside. Someone had very, very softly stolen up and grabbed it and begun to pull. It was so sudden and unexpected that Happy Jack had yelled with fright. When he could get his wits together, he thought that, of course, Striped Chipmunk had come back and was pulling his tail. When he thought that, he got over his fright right away, for Striped Chipmunk is such a little fellow that Happy Jack knew that he had nothing to fear from him.

So as fast as he could, Happy Jack backed out of the hole and whirled about. Of course he expected to face a very angry little chipmunk. But he didn't. No, sir, he didn't. Instead, he looked right into the angry face of his other cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel. And Chatterer was angry! Oh my, my, how angry Chatterer was! For a minute he couldn't find his voice, because his anger fairly choked him. And when he did, how his tongue did fly!

"You thief! You robber! What are you doing in my storehouse?" he shrieked. Happy Jack backed away hurriedly, for though he is much bigger than Chatterer, he has a very wholesome respect for Chatterer's sharp teeth, and when he is very angry, Chatterer is a great fighter.

"I—I didn't know it was your storehouse," said Happy Jack, backing away still further.

"It doesn't make any difference if you didn't; you're a thief just the same!" screamed Chatterer and rushed at Happy Jack. And what do you think Happy Jack did? Why, he just turned tail and ran, Chatterer after him, crying "Thief! Robber! Coward!" at the top of his lungs, so that everyone in the Green Forest could hear.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 9)*



STORY 251. December 2, 1912.

## Striped Chipmunk's Happy Thought.

Striped Chipmunk sat on a mossy old log, laughing until his sides ached. "Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!" laughed Striped Chipmunk, holding his sides. Over in the Green Forest he could still hear Chatterer the Red Squirrel crying "Thief! Robber!" as he chased his big cousin, Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel, and every time he heard it, Striped Chipmunk laughed harder.

You see, Striped Chipmunk had known all the time that Happy Jack was spying on him, and he had had no end of fun fooling Happy Jack by suddenly disappearing and then bobbing into view. He had known that Happy Jack was following him so as to find out where his storehouse was. Then Striped Chipmunk had remembered the storehouse of Chatterer the Red Squirrel. He had filled the pockets in his cheeks with acorns and gone straight over to Chatterer's storehouse and put them inside, knowing that Happy Jack would follow him and would think that that was his storehouse. And that is just what happened. Then Striped Chipmunk had hidden himself where he could see all that happened. He had seen Happy Jack look all around, to make sure that no one was near, and then tear open the little round doorway of Chatterer's storehouse until it was big enough for him to squeeze through. He had seen Chatterer come up, fly into a rage, and pull Happy Jack out by the tail. Indeed, he had had to clap both hands over his mouth to keep from laughing out loud.

Then Happy Jack had turned tail and run away with Chatterer after him, shouting "Thief" and "Robber" at the top of his voice, and this had tickled Striped Chipmunk still more, for he knew that Chatterer himself is one of the greatest thieves in the Green Forest. So he sat on the mossy old log and laughed and laughed and laughed.

Finally Striped Chipmunk wiped the tears from his eyes and jumped up. "My, my, this will never do!" said he.

Idle hands and idle feet  
Never filled a storehouse yet;  
But instead, so I've heard say,  
Into mischief surely get.

"Here it is almost Thanksgiving and—" Striped Chipmunk stopped and scratched his head, while a funny little pleased look crept into his face. "I wonder if Happy Jack and Chatterer would come to a Thanksgiving dinner," he muttered. "I believe I'll ask them just for fun."

Then Striped Chipmunk hurried home full of his new idea and chuckled as he planned his Thanksgiving dinner. Of course, he couldn't have it at his own house. That wouldn't do at all. In the first place, the doorway would be altogether too small for Happy Jack. Anyway, his home was a secret, his very own secret, and he didn't propose to let Happy Jack and Chatterer know where it was, even for a Thanksgiving dinner. Then he thought of the big, smooth, mossy log he had been sitting on that very morning.

“The very place!” cried Striped Chipmunk, and scurried away to find Happy Jack Squirrel and Chatterer the Red Squirrel to invite them to his Thanksgiving dinner.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 10)*

## STORY 252. December 3, 1912.

### Striped Chipmunk’s Thanksgiving Dinner.

Striped Chipmunk jumped out of bed very early Thanksgiving morning. It was going to be a very busy day. He had invited Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel, and Chatterer the Red Squirrel, to eat Thanksgiving dinner with him, and each had promised to be there. Striped Chipmunk chuckled as he thought how neither of his guests knew that the other was to be there. He washed his face and hands, brushed his hair, and ate his breakfast. Then he scurried over to his splendid new storehouse, which no one knew of but himself, and stuffed the pockets in his cheeks with good things to eat. When he couldn’t stuff another thing in, he scurried over to the nice, mossy log on the edge of the Green Forest, and there he emptied his pockets, for that was to be his dining table.

Back and forth, back and forth between his secret storehouse and the smooth, mossy log hurried Striped Chipmunk. He knew that Happy Jack and the Chatterer have great appetites, and he wanted to be sure that there was plenty of good things to eat. And as he scurried along, he sang a little song.

Thanksgiving comes but once a year,  
But when it comes it brings good cheer.  
For in my storehouse on this day  
Are piles of good things hid away.  
Each day I’ve worked from early morn  
To gather acorns, nuts, and corn,  
Till now I’ve plenty and to spare  
Without a worry or a care.  
So light of heart the whole day long,  
I’ll sing a glad Thanksgiving song.

Promptly at the dinner hour Happy Jack appeared coming from one direction, and Chatterer the Red Squirrel coming from another direction. They didn’t see each other until just as they reached Striped Chipmunk’s smooth, mossy log.

Then they stopped and scowled, for you know they had had a dreadful quarrel and Chatterer had caught Happy Jack breaking into his storehouse only the day before. Striped Chipmunk pretended not to notice anything wrong and bustled about, talking all the time as if his guests were the best of friends.

On the smooth, mossy log was a great pile of shining yellow corn. There was another pile of plump ripe acorns, and three little piles of dainty looking brown seeds. But the thing that Happy Jack couldn’t keep his eyes off was right in the middle. It was a huge pile of big, fat hickory nuts. Now who could remain ill-tempered and cross

with such a lot of goodies spread before him? Certainly not Happy Jack or his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel. They just had to smile in spite of themselves, and when Striped Chipmunk urged them to sit down and help themselves, they did. In three minutes they were so busy eating that they had forgotten all about their quarrel and were laughing and chatting like the best of friends.

“It’s quite a family party, isn’t it?” said Striped Chipmunk, for you know they are all cousins.

Whitefoot the Wood Mouse happened along, and Striped Chipmunk insisted that he should join the party. Later Sammy Jay came along, and nothing would excuse him from sharing in the feast, too. When everybody had eaten and eaten until they couldn’t hold another thing, and it was time to think of going home, Striped Chipmunk insisted that Happy Jack and Chatterer should divide between them the big, fat hickory nuts that were left, and they did without once quarreling about it.

Thanksgiving comes but once a year,  
And when it comes it brings good cheer,

said Striped Chipmunk to himself as he watched his guests depart.

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 11)*

## STORY 253. December 4, 1912.

### Happy Jack Does Some Thinking

Happy Jack sat up in the chestnut tree where his home is and his face was very sober. The fact is, Happy Jack was doing some very hard thinking. This is so very unusual for him that Sammy Jay stopped to ask if he was sick. You see he is naturally a happy-go-lucky little scamp, and that is one reason that he is called Happy Jack. But this morning he was thinking and thinking hard, so hard, in fact, that he almost lost his temper when Sammy Jay interrupted his thoughts with such a foolish question.

What was he thinking about? Can you not guess? Why, he was thinking about those big, fat hickory nuts that Striped Chipmunk had had for his Thanksgiving dinner, and how Striped Chipmunk had given him some of them to bring home. He was very sure that they were the very same nuts that he had watched grow big and fat in the top of the tall hickory tree and then had knocked down while chasing his cousin, Chatterer the Red Squirrel. When they had reached the ground and found the nuts gone, Happy Jack had at once suspected that Striped Chipmunk had taken them, and now he felt sure about it.

But all at once things looked very different to Happy Jack, and the more he thought about how he had acted, the more ashamed of himself he grew.

“There certainly must have been enough of those nuts for all of us, and if I hadn’t been such a greedy pig we might all have had a share. As it is, I’ve got only those that Striped Chipmunk gave me at his Thanksgiving dinner, and Chatterer has only those that Striped Chipmunk gave him. It must be that that sharp little cousin of mine with

the striped coat has got the rest, and I guess he deserves them.”

Then all of a sudden Happy Jack realized how Striped Chipmunk had fooled him into thinking that the storehouse of Chatterer was his storehouse, and Happy Jack began to laugh. The more he thought of it, the harder he laughed.

“The joke certainly is on me!” he said. “The joke certainly is on me, and it served me right. Hereafter I’ll mind my own business. If I had spent half as much time looking for nuts of my own as I did looking for Striped Chipmunk’s storehouse, I would be ready for winter now, and Chatterer couldn’t call me a thief.”

Then he laughed again as he thought how Striped Chipmunk must have enjoyed seeing him pulled out of Chatterer’s storehouse by the tail.

“What’s the joke?” asked Bobby Coon, who happened along just then.

“I’ve just learned a lesson,” replied Happy Jack.

“What is it?” asked Bobby.

Happy Jack grinned as he answered:

“I’ve found that greed will never, never pay.  
It makes one cross and ugly, and it drives one’s friends away.  
And being always selfish and always wanting more,  
One’s very apt to lose the things that one has had before.”

“Pooh!” said Bobby Coon. “Have you just found that out? I learned that a long time ago. Let’s go over to Farmer Brown’s cornfield.”

*(Happy Jack, Chapter 12)*

## STORY 254. December 5, 1912.

### What Happened in Farmer Brown’s Cornfield.

Farmer Brown’s cornfield on the edge of the Green Meadows looked very different from what it did in the days when Blacky the Crow pulled up the tender young plants, or later in the summer when on moonlight nights Bobby Coon feasted there on the sweet milk corn. Yes, indeed, it looked very different, but it looked even better to Happy Jack Squirrel than in those other days. Happy Jack climbed up on a fence post and gave a great sigh of satisfaction and pleasure as he looked over the brown field. Instead of the long rows of broad leaved, tall green plants were rows of what looked like brown tents, and Happy Jack knew that in every one of them were many, many ears of beautiful, bright yellow corn.

“Come on!” said Bobby Coon, crawling under the fence.

Happy Jack drew a long breath of pure delight and scrambled down the fence post and two minutes later he was sitting on top of one of those brown tents stuffing himself with that bright, yellow corn.

It was the first time that Happy Jack had been to the cornfield since the corn was

ripe, but Bobby Coon had been there many times. In fact, Bobby Coon had visited it almost every night and he knew just where the corn was biggest and best, which was way over in the middle of the field. So he wasted no time on the brown tents on the edge of the field but went straight over to the very middle of the field and began tearing open one of the brown tents to get at the plump ears hidden way inside.

Now it is hard work to think of one's stomach when one is thinking of other things, and it is still harder work to think of other things when one is thinking of one's stomach.

Happy Jack Squirrel, sitting on top of that brown corn tent, had no room for thought of anything but how good that corn tasted as he ate and ate and ate. He quite forgot that there might be danger so far away from the Green Forest. It wasn't until a stone landed kerplunk against the brown cornstalks he was sitting on and a loud shout frightened him so that he nearly fell over backward that he was aware that Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy had come down to the cornfield.

There they were, almost over to him, and Farmer Brown's boy was just getting ready to throw another stone! Happy Jack didn't wait for him to do it. He dropped the corn he was eating and like a gray flash he dodged around on the other side of the brown tent. Then he scampered over and around the next one, his heart going pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat with fright.

Now when Happy Jack is frightened, he can run very fast, and you may be sure he ran his fastest now. He doesn't feel so much at home on the ground as in the tree tops of the Green Forest and he wished with all his might that he had never heard of Farmer Brown's cornfield. Dodging in and out around the brown corn tents he reached the fence and scrambled up. Then for the first time he looked around. Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy were not following him. They were not even looking for him. Instead they were studying something on the ground. What could it be? Then suddenly Happy Jack knew.

## STORY 255. December 6, 1912.

### What Farmer Brown and his Son were Studying.

Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy were studying and studying the ground down in the cornfield on the edge of the Green Meadows.

As soon as he was sure that they were not chasing him Happy Jack Squirrel sat up on a fence post to watch them. At first he couldn't make out what they were doing but suddenly it popped into his head just what they were doing. Farmer Brown's boy was squatting down and pointing to something and Happy Jack did not need hear him say: "It's almost like the footprint of a baby," to know that they had found the tracks of Bobby Coon.

Yes, sir, that is just what had happened. First they had surprised Happy Jack sitting on a brown corn tent stuffing himself with bright, yellow corn and had started to chase him out of the cornfield. At least Farmer Brown's boy had. Farmer Brown himself had

laughed and shouted: "Go it Bushy Tail! I guess there's corn enough for us to spare you a little!"

And just then Farmer Brown's boy had stopped running. You see he has tramped about over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest much that he has learned how to use his eyes, which is something that many little boys and girls never do learn, and though he was watching Happy Jack whom he was chasing he was not so foolish as not to look where his feet were going, and so he saw those queer little footprints in some soft earth, He forgot all about Happy Jack right away.

"They've been made this very morning and only just a little while ago," said he as he and Farmer Brown began to follow them.

"I guess you're right, son," replied Farmer Brown. "I reckon that Mr. Coon is somewhere in this cornfield this very minute. If we had Bowser, the hound here we'd soon find out."

"I'll go back up to the house and get him!" exclaimed Farmer Brown's boy eagerly.

"No," said Farmer Brown, we haven't time. "Perhaps we can track him and find him ourselves."

So slowly and carefully so not to make a bit of noise they began to follow Bobby Coon's funny little footprints which looked so much like a baby's. Happy Jack Squirrel, sitting on the fence post and watching them, felt his heart sink way down as he thought of Bobby Coon somewhere over in the middle of the cornfield not knowing that danger was anywhere near.

What could Happy Jack do to let Bobby Coon know? He didn't dare go over there himself. No, sir, he simply didn't dare. Just then some of the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind came dancing along. Happy Jack had a happy thought. He would send them to warn Bobby Coon. So Happy Jack called to the Merry Little Breezes and when they had gathered around him he told them as fast as his tongue could fly how Bobby Coon was over in the middle of the cornfield and didn't know anything about his danger. The Merry Little Breezes waited just long enough to understand what it all meant, then away they raced to try and find Bobby Coon and warn him. Happy Jack gave a great sigh of relief as he watched them go.

STORY 256. December 7, 1912.

## The Exciting Hunt for Bobby Coon

When Happy Jack Squirrel asked the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind to hurry over to the middle of the cornfield and warn Bobby Coon that Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy had found his tracks and were looking for him, the Merry Little Breezes had rushed away in great excitement. All that Happy Jack could tell them was that Bobby Coon was somewhere in the middle of the cornfield, just where Happy Jack didn't know. They would have to find him themselves.

Illustrations. December 2 to December 7, 1912.



251. Striped Chipmunk's Happy Thought



252. Striped Chipmunk's Thanksgiving Dinner



253. Happy Jack Squirrel Does Some Thinking



254. What Happened in Farmer Brown's Cornfield



255. What Farmer Brown and His Son Were Studying



256. The Exciting Hunt for Bobby Coon

Now the way that the Merry Little Breezes tell the little meadow and forest people that danger is near is by carrying every little sound to the sharp little ears of whoever they are trying to warn, or by carrying the smell of the danger to the keen little nose of the one who is in danger. So now they hurried over to Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy to get the smell of them and then hunt among the brown corn tents for Bobby Coon. There wasn't any sound for them to carry, for Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy were not making the least bit of noise as they followed Bobby Coon's tracks.

Just as soon as the Merry Little Breezes got that man smell they rushed straight ahead with it, but not knowing just where Bobby Coon was, they started in the wrong direction. Farmer Brown smiled, for you see he knows all about the Merry Little Breeze and he knew just what they were trying to do, so he kept right on following Bobby Coon's tracks. When the Merry Little Breezes failed to find Bobby, they rushed back to start in another direction. This time they started in the same direction that Bobby's tracks pointed, but Farmer Brown was watching out sharp and the instant they started he and his boy went off to one side and began to work toward the middle of the cornfield from that point.

Now such a very faint smell as a man smell is one of the hardest things in the world to carry and the only way in which the Merry Little Breezes can carry it is by working all together and continually passing it along from one to another. Of course when Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy move off to one side the nearest Little Breeze lost the smell and couldn't pass it along. So back they all had to come and start over and this time they went in the wrong direction again and once more Farmer Brown smiled as he and his boy very, very carefully approached one brown corn tent after another all the time watching out for Bobby Coon. The Merry Little Breezes grew so excited that they separated and scattered in all directions hunting for Bobby Coon and then of course they couldn't carry the smell at all.

Happy Jack Squirrel, watching from the fence post where he had first called to the Merry Little Breezes, grew so excited that he couldn't keep still. Who would find Bobby Coon first? He could see Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy getting nearer and nearer to the middle of the cornfield and his heart almost stopped beating as he thought of what might happen to Bobby Coon if they should find him. It was dreadful to sit there and not be able to do anything at all to warn Bobby!

"O dear! O dear! They'll surely get him!" wailed Happy Jack.

## STORY 257. December 9, 1912

### What Happened to Bobby Coon

Bobby Coon sat just inside one of the brown tents of cornstalks in the middle of Farmer Brown's cornfield. He had torn a place to crawl in where the biggest and best ears were hidden and now he was enjoying himself to his heart's content. It isn't often that Bobby Coon is so unwise as to visit a cornfield in broad daylight and he ought to have been on the watch every minute this time. But he wasn't. No, sir, Bobby Coon



wasn't on the watch at all. That was why he didn't see Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy come down the lane and into the cornfield. He just forgot everything but the good time he was having.

Happy Jack Squirrel sat on a fence post, his heart going pit-a-pat with fright as he thought of what might happen to Bobby Coon. The Merry Little Breezes grew more and more excited as they raced back and forth across the field trying to find Bobby Coon and warn him of his danger. And the more excited they grew the less grew their chance of finding Bobby Coon, for you know that excited folks seldom do things at all well.

All this time Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy were following the tracks of Bobby Coon and walking as softly as they knew how so that Bobby Coon should not hear them coming. Right in the middle of the field the tracks led around one of the Brown corn tents. Farmer Brown peeped around it very, very carefully and then he beckoned to his boy to do the same thing. What do you think they saw? Why right in the middle of the very next corn tent sat Bobby Coon just as if he owned that whole field of corn.

Farmer Brown's boy's eyes shone. That fat coon would make a splendid dinner and his beautiful gray and black coat would make the warmest kind of a cap. Then suddenly he remembered that he had left his terrible gun at home and that they had nothing but their bare hands with which to get Bobby Coon. These would never do, for you know Bobby Coon has sharp teeth and he is very strong. Farmer Brown's boy leaned over to whisper in the ear of Farmer Brown. "You stay here while I go get a club and we'll soon settle Mr. Coon," said he.

Farmer Brown nodded, and just as softly as he had come Farmer Brown's boy stole back to get a club. As soon as he was out of sight behind the brown corn tents something happened, something that frightened Bobby Coon so that he jumped almost out of his skin and that tickled Farmer Brown so that he laughed until he shook all over. You see Farmer Brown is a big man and he has a big heart. He really loves the little meadow and forest people. So as soon as his boy was out of sight behind the brown corn tents Farmer Brown picked up a tiny, tiny stone and tossed it so that it fell at Bobby Coon's feet. Of course Bobby looked up straight into the face of Farmer Brown. For a second Bobby was so surprised and frightened that he didn't move and then he started down the row of brown corn tents straight for the Green Forest at a rate that made the sand fly.

A few minutes later back came Farmer Brown's boy creeping as softly as before and he had two big clubs. Farmer Brown took one and, pretending that he didn't know that Bobby Coon had gone, he rushed around one side of the brown corn tent while Farmer Brown's boy rushed around the other. Of course, there was no Bobby Coon and, of course Farmer Brown's boy was terribly disappointed. Farmer Brown pretended to be disappointed, too, but all the time there was a twinkle in his eyes and every once in a while, on their way home he chuckled to himself.

STORY 258. December 10, 1912.

## Farmer Brown's Boy Plans to get Bobby Coon.

Farmer Brown's boy did a great deal of thinking as he helped load the big farm wagon with yellow corn. Every once in a while, Farmer Brown would look over at him and his eyes would twinkle.

You see Farmer Brown knew just what his boy was thinking about, for once upon a time Farmer Brown had been a boy himself. So Farmer Brown's eyes twinkled, for he knew that his boy was wondering what had frightened Bobby Coon after they had found him in the corn field that morning and was planning even then how he would hunt for Bobby Coon some moonlight night. And that is just exactly what Farmer Brown's boy was thinking.

Over in the Green Forest at the foot of Bobby Coon's hollow tree Bobby Coon and Happy Jack Squirrel were talking over their adventure in Farmer Brown's corn field that morning.

Happy Jack was happy, very happy indeed, to think that they were safe once more. Now, that they were back in the Green Forest, Happy Jack no longer had any fear of Farmer Brown's boy, for he felt sure that he could keep safely out of sight in the tree tops. So he frisked about as merry as you please as he told Bobby Coon how he had sent the Merry Little Breezes to warn Bobby of his danger in the cornfield and how hard the Merry Little Breezes had tried to find Bobby and couldn't.

Bobby Coon sat with his hands folded across his fat little stomach and never once smiled as he listened. His sober face was very sober, very, very sober and it seemed sometimes as if he didn't hear Happy Jack at all. By and by Happy Jack noticed it.

"What's the matter Mr. Sober Face? One would think that you had lost your last friend, instead of having just escaped from great danger," said Happy Jack.

Bobby Coon heaved a great sigh. "My troubles have just begun. Farmer Brown's boy will hunt for me now just as he did for Reddy Fox and maybe I'll have to move way off to the far away back pasture on the edge of the mountain just as Reddy did," said he dolefully. "I'll have to stick tight to my hollow tree now in the day time."

That night after supper Farmer Brown's boy took his gun and whistled for Bowser the Hound.

"Where are you going?" asked Farmer Brown, the twinkle still in his eyes.

"To look for that coon we saw this morning," replied Farmer Brown's boy.

So, with Bowser the Hound running ahead and sniffing the ground, he went down to the corn field where they had seen Bobby Coon that morning. But there was no longer any scent left in Bobby's tracks and sniff and sniff as he would Bowser the Hound could not follow them. Farmer Brown's boy sat on the fence in the moonlight and watched him. Bowser worked as hard as ever he could, but it was of no use. Finally Farmer Brown's boy hopped down from the fence and patted Bowser on the head.

“Never mind, old fellow,” said he. “I guess that coon was so badly scared that he hasn’t come out again yet, but we’ll have a grand hunt for him tomorrow night. He must live somewhere near and we’ll get him yet.”

## STORY 259. December 11, 1912.

### Bobby Coon goes Fishing

Bobby Coon thrust his head out of his hollow tree in the Green Forest and cautiously looked this way and looked that way. The silvery moonlight made queer shadows all through the Green Forest, but Bobby Coon was not afraid of shadows. For a long time he sat in his doorway and looked and listened, but there was no one to be seen and not a sound could he hear. Slowly and carefully Bobby climbed down the hollow tree. When he reached the ground, he yawned. Then he stretched his front legs and after that his hind legs. After this he sat down to think, and while he thought he kept rubbing his stomach with one hand.

“What a bother an empty stomach is,” thought Bobby Coon. Then he chuckled as he added: “But what fun it is to fill it!”

Bobby Coon certainly was hungry. There was no doubt about that. You see for two days and nights he had had nothing to eat. No, sir, he hadn’t had a mouthful since that morning when Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown’s boy had found him in the cornfield. He had felt sure that Farmer Brown’s boy would get Bowser the Hound and try to find him again, and so he had wisely staid curled up snug and safe in his warm bed in the hollow tree. But now his stomach just wouldn’t give him any peace. He had just got to get something to put in it. Of course the easiest thing to get would be some of that delicious yellow corn over in Farmer Brown’s cornfield. It made Bobby’s mouth water just to think of it. But it wouldn’t do to go there again, not right off, anyway, for if Farmer Brown’s boy really was looking for him that would be the very first place he would look. No, he would have to get his dinner somewhere else. “I believe I’ll go fishing,” said Bobby Coon, and off he started for the Laughing Brook.

Now, Bobby Coon dearly loves fish, and though he is no swimmer he is a very smart fisherman. Very, very softly he strode down to a little pool he knew of where little minnows love to play because there they are safe from the hungry big fish that live in the deep water. Bobby Coon didn’t rustle so much as a leaf as he crept to the edge of the little pool. Then he sat very still in the black shadow of an old stump. The little pool shone in the moonlight and suddenly there was a little splash right in the middle of it and then another and another. The little minnows were playing and jumping out of the water.

By and by one of them grew careless and jumped right close to Bobby Coon. Like a flash one of his little black hands shot out and scooped that careless little minnow out on the bank, and it was done so quickly and so neatly that it didn’t scare the other little minnows. My, how good that little fish did taste! It tasted just like more, and in a few minutes Bobby was back in the black shadow sitting as still as before.

So he fished and ate and ate and fished and had such a good time that he forgot all about Farmer Brown's boy and Bowser the Hound. Suddenly a voice which seemed to come from right over his head said:

"Oh, here you are! I've hunted everywhere for you. Farmer Brown's boy and Bowser the Hound have been down in the cornfield and now, they are in the Green Forest." It was Hooty the Owl.

"How do you know?" demanded Bobby Coon anxiously, forgetting all about fishing.

"Because I saw them," replied Hooty the Owl, "and Farmer Brown's boy has got his terrible gun."

## STORY 260. December 12, 1912.

### Bobby Coon Doesn't Dare go Home

Bobby Coon sat hunched up in the black shadow of an old stump on the edge of a little pool in the Laughing Brook. The little pool shone in the silvery moonlight and every few minutes a little minnow made a tiny splash as he jumped out of water in play. Bobby Coon took no notice. His stomach was quite full of other little minnows who had jumped too close to the black shadow of the old stump and so had come within reach of his little black hand. Still he could have eaten more if Hooty the Owl had not brought him the news that Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown's boy with his terrible gun were in the Green Forest. Just as soon as he had heard that, Bobby Coon had lost his appetite.

"They are hunting for me, that's what they are doing," said Bobby Coon to himself. "Now what shall I do? If I go home I may meet them and that would be—well, that would be very unpleasant." Bobby shivered just a little as he thought of it. "If Farmer Brown's boy was alone I could fool him just as easily as not, but Bowser the Hound is different. That nose of his would just smell me out and I'm too fat to run far. I wish—I wish—that I had stayed right in my hollow tree."

Then Bobby remembered how hungry he had been and how good those little minnows he had caught had tasted and somehow he was glad that he had come fishing after all.

There's nothing like a stomach full  
To make one feel quite happy.  
The trouble is that afterward  
One always feels so nappy.

Bobby Coon yawned as he said this. Then he settled himself more comfortably and added: "I don't dare go home yet and I don't know where else to go, so I guess I'll stay right here and see what happens."

For what seemed like a long time to Bobby Coon nothing happened. He looked up at Mother Moon smiling down from the sky and wished that he could climb up

there with her and look down and see everything as she was doing, for then he could know just where Farmer Brown's boy and Bowser the Hound were. The little minnows splashed in the little pool and once he heard the hunting call of Hooty the Owl way over on the other side of the Green Forest. By and by he heard a rustle in the leaves just back of him. For a minute Bobby Coon's heart almost stopped beating and he held his breath. Then out jumped a slim, trim little fellow in a brown coat. Bobby gave a great sigh of relief.

"Hello, Billy Mink!" he exclaimed.

"Hello yourself, Bobby Coon! What are you doing down here?" replied Billy Mink.

"I—I'm sitting here because I'm afraid to go home," replied Bobby Coon.

"Afraid to go home! What's the matter with you—afraid of the dark?" cried Billy Mink.

"You know better than that, Billy Mink!" exclaimed Bobby Coon indignantly. Then he told Billy all about his meeting with Farmer Brown and Farmer Brown's boy in the cornfield two days before and how Hooty the Owl had warned him that Farmer Brown's boy and Bowser the Hound were in the Green Forest even then. Just as he finished there was a sound back of them in the Green Forest that made every hair on Bobby Coon stand up on end. It was a great deep voice and it said: "Bow, wow, wow, wow!"

"Bowser the Hound has found my tracks," said Bobby Coon in a very small voice.

## STORY 261. December 13, 1912.

### **Billy Mink and Bobby Coon Put their Heads Together.**

"Bow wow, wow, w-o-w!" The great voice of Bowser the Hound rang through the Green Forest. Unc' Billy Possum, who was just starting out of the doorway of his home in a big hollow tree, stopped as he heard it. He scratched his head thoughtfully.

"Ah reckon Ah isn't as hungry fo' fresh eggs as Ah tho't Ah was. Ah reckon it's just as well that Ah did oversleep this fine evening and Ah guess Ah might just as well go back to bed and sleep some mo'," said he. "Now, Ah wonder who-all that no-'count dog is making such a fuss about. Ah doan believe it can be old Granny Fox or Reddy Fox, bekaze the last Ah heered they were still living in retirement in the far-away old pasture. Ah reckon it must be Bobby Coon. Yes, sah,—that's jest who Ah reckons it is. Ah hopes Bobby done got a safe hiding place."

Bobby Coon and Billy Mink, over on the edge of the Laughing Brook, heard the great voice and they knew quite as well as Unc' Billy Possum what it meant. It made every hair on Bobby Coon stand up on end and little cold shivers run all over him. If there had been no one but Bowser the Hound Bobby Coon wouldn't have cared a snap of his little finger. He could climb a tree and laugh at Bowser the Hound. But there

was Farmer Brown's boy! He could shoot with that terrible gun into the top of the tallest tree. Bobby Coon knew that no tree would be safe for him once Farmer Brown's boy knew that he was there. But Farmer Brown's boy had to depend upon Bowser the Hound to find Bobby Coon's hiding place and Bobby knew that if he could fool Bowser he would be safe.

"Oh, dear! What shall I do?" wailed Bobby, wringing his hands. "I don't dare to try to go home because Bowser the Hound will follow me there and then Farmer Brown's boy will cut open my hollow tree and get me."

"You can swim, can't you?" asked Billy Mink.

"Of course, I can swim," replied Bobby Coon. "What of it? If I swim across the Laughing Brook Farmer Brown's boy will guess where I have gone and will send Bowser the Hound across and then he'll find my tracks again. So what's the use of swimming?"

"Pooh!" exclaimed Billy Mink. "Your wits are slow, Bobby Coon. It's the easiest thing in the world to fool Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown's boy. Now, you listen to me."

Then Billy Mink put his head close to Bobby Coon's head and whispered in one of Bobby's ears. Bobby Coon's face brightened as he listened. "I believe you're right," said he.

"Of course, I'm right," replied Billy Mink. "Why, I've sat right in plain sight of Farmer Brown's boy and he didn't see me at all, didn't know I was anywhere near. And yet he looked right at me. That's the way with boys and men and it is lucky for us it is. They sometimes see things where they expect to see them, but they almost never see things where they don't expect to see them."

"Bow, wow, wow, w-o-w!" Bowser's voice was drawing very near.

"Come on," said Billy Mink, "and don't you be afraid."

## STORY 262. December 14, 1912.

### How Billy Mink's Plan Worked Out

"You follow me," said Billy Mink to Bobby Coon as the voice of Bowser the Hound drew nearer and nearer to the Laughing Brook, where they were sitting on the edge of a little pool.

"I will," said Bobby Coon meekly, though he was all of a shake, for you see he didn't yet quite understand Billy Mink's plan for fooling Bowser the Hound. Bowser's great voice as it roared "Bow, wow, wow, w-o-w," nearer and nearer, made Bobby Coon nervous. It gave him unpleasant, creepy feelings all the way from the tip of his nose to the longest hair on the end of his tail. But he followed Billy Mink along the bank up the Laughing Brook and asked no questions.

After a little, Billy Mink waded into the Laughing Brook and began to go back in

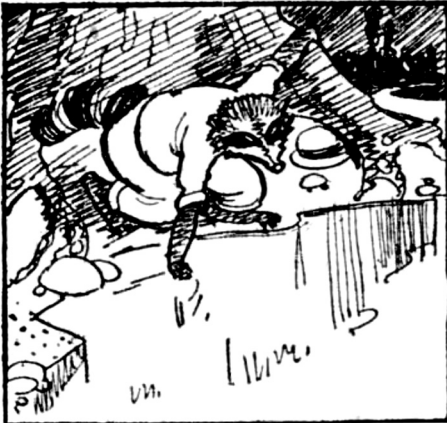
Illustrations. December 9 to December 14, 1912.



257. What Happened to Bobby Coon



258. Farmer Brown's Boy Plans to Get Bobby Coon



259. Bobby Coon Goes Fishing



260. Bobby Coon Doesn't Dare Go Home



261. Billy Mink and Bobby Coon Put Their Heads Together



262. How Billy Mink's Plan Worked Out

the very direction they had just come from. Bobby Coon's creepy feelings grew still more creepy. It seemed to him straight into danger instead out of it. Still Bobby Coon didn't say a word, but waded along after Billy Mink, for he knew that Billy Mink is very, very smart and knows all kinds of tricks to fool those who try to catch him. Right through the little pool in which Bobby Coon had been fishing in the shadow of an old stump they waded, and on down the Laughing Brook, until presently they came to the Smiling Pool. On the edge of this Billy Mink paused and listened. Then he grinned, for Bowser's voice was growing more and more excited as he followed Bobby Coon's track through the Green Forest down toward the place where Bobby had been fishing.

"He thinks he's got you this time for sure," whispered Billy Mink.

Bobby soon shivered more than ever "What—what did you go up the Laughing Brook for and then come right back past the very place we started from?" he asked. "If we'd kept on going in one direction, we might be twice as far away as we are now."

"Oh, you stupid," exclaimed Billy Mink. "Don't you see that Bowser the Hound is going to follow your tracks up the Laughing Brook, but that he cannot follow them down again because you waded in water all the way? Of course, he and Farmer Brown's boy will think that you have gone on up the Laughing Brook and will hunt up there for you. Now, come on and follow me.

Billy Mink started out into the Smiling Pool as he said this and began to swim straight toward Jerry Muskrat's house. Bobby Coon followed.

"Wait up, Billy Mink," he panted.

Billy, who can swim several times as fast as Bobby Coon, good naturedly waited.

"Where are we going?" panted Bobby Coon.

"To Jerry Muskrat's house, of course," replied Billy Mink. "But I can't get inside because the door is under water," wailed Bobby Coon.

"Nobody expects you to," replied Billy Mink. "We'll just climb up on the dark side where the moon doesn't shine and sit on Jerry's roof till Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown's boy get tired of hunting and go home. Farmer Brown's boy never will think to look for a Coon on a Muskrat's house."

It was too late to turn back now, anyway, so, shaking harder than ever, Bobby Coon followed Billy Mink and climbed up on the roof of Jerry Muskrat's house where the shadow was blackest. There, side by side, the two little rascals sat and watched everything happen just as Billy Mink had said it would. Bowser the Hound came roaring down to the little pool where Bobby Coon had been fishing and then rushed off up the Laughing Brook. Behind him came Farmer Brown's boy with his terrible gun. When Bowser reached the place where Bobby Coon and Billy Mink had entered the Laughing Brook he stopped barking. They could hear him rushing around trying to find Bobby's tracks again, and they knew by the sound that he was looking farther up the Laughing Brook.

A little later Farmer Brown's boy with Bowser at his heels, stood on the edge of



the Smiling Pool looking straight at Jerry Muskrat's house.

"It's of no use, Bowser, old boy, we'll have to give it up tonight," said Farmer Brown's boy. Billy Mink nudged Bobby Coon.

## STORY 263. December 16, 1912.

### Chatterer the Red Squirrel gets Excited

Chatterer the Red Squirrel had a new storehouse. When he found that Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel had found his old storehouse Chatterer had not felt easy in his mind. You see Chatterer steals from other folks sometimes, I am sorry to say, and because folks who do wrong things themselves always suspect that other folks are going to do wrong things, too, Chatterer was afraid to leave his nuts and corn and acorns in the old storehouse, now that it had been discovered by Happy Jack. So Chatterer had scurried around through the Green Forest until he had found an old hollow log, a great big hollow log not far from the Laughing Brook.

It was a splendid place for a storehouse. It was open at one end with a great big hollow in which were a few dried leaves. The farther in you went the smaller the hollow grew until finally you came to a wall, a wall of soft, rotting wood, but a wall just the same. No one would think of trying to go any farther, that is, no one but a Red Squirrel. Chatterer had found a tiny hole through that wall and he had worked at it until he had made it large enough for him to crawl through. Then he found himself in the snuggest, driest, warmest chamber you can imagine. It was just the place for his new storehouse.

So every chance he got Chatterer the Red Squirrel took the nuts and the corn and the acorns from his old storehouse and put them in his new storehouse, watching out all the time that no one should see him doing it. This particular morning Chatterer had hopped out of bed very early, in fact just as jolly, round, red, Mr. Sun had thrown his rosy bedclothes off behind the Purple Hills. There were only a few nuts left to be carried to the new storehouse and Chatterer was impatient to get them over there.

With a big hickory nut in his mouth Chatterer scampered over to the open end of the hollow log. He looked this way and looked that way to be sure that no one saw him and then he dodged inside the hollow log. In less than a minute he was outside again, the very maddest squirrel in the world. You know Chatterer has a very short temper and scolds at nothing. Now he was so angry that he danced up and down and his tongue flew as only Chatterer's tongue can fly when he is angry.

"Thief! thief! robber! robber!" he shrieked. "Come out of my house!"

No one came out and there was not a sound from inside the hollow log. Chatterer gradually drew nearer and nearer to the open end of the old log, scolding all the time. When he had first discovered some one inside he had been too frightened to see who it was. Now, as he heard nothing, he grew bolder and crept a little way inside. Then he saw who the unwelcome tenant of the old log was.

“What are you doing there, Bobby Coon?” demanded Chatterer.

The only reply was a gentle snore.

This made Chatterer angrier than ever and he scolded until he had to stop for breath. And still Bobby Coon slept. Chatterer reached over and gave one of Bobby Coon’s ears a sharp nip with his strong little teeth. Bobby stirred uneasily.

“Go ‘way,” he murmured sleepily.

Chatterer nipped him again. This time Bobby Coon opened his eyes wide and he was cross.

“Here! What are you trying to do?” he demanded.

“Trying to find out what you are doing in my house!” snapped Chatterer.

“It isn’t you house,” said Bobby Coon.

“‘Tis, too!” shrieked Chatterer.

“Well, it’s mine now,” said Bobby, once more curling himself up.

And all Chatterer could do was scold and scold and scold.

## STORY 264. December 17, 1912.

### Someone hears Chatterer the Red Squirrel

Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, is the worst scolder in the Green Forest. He scolds at everybody and everything when his temper is short, which is most of the time. Everybody has learned by this time that when they hear Chatterer scolding there is almost sure to be someone else near, on whom Chatterer is sharpening his already sharp tongue. Farmer Brown learned this a long, long time ago, and Farmer Brown’s boy had learned it, too.

So this morning when Farmer Brown’s boy entered the Green Forest he grinned as he heard Chatterer’s sharp voice way down near the Laughing Brook.

“I wonder what Chatterer has found now; he seems to be more excited than usual,” said Farmer Brown’s boy. “Probably Blacky the Crow or Sammy Jay has found his storehouse and stolen some of his nuts.” Then, a sudden thought striking him, he gave a long, low whistle. “It may be, it just may be that he has run across that Coon that Bowser and I lost track of last night. I believe I’ll go down and see,” said he.

So walking as carefully as he could, so as to make no noise, Farmer Brown’s boy stole down through the Green Forest to try to surprise Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, and find out what he was making such a fuss about. But it is seldom that Chatterer is caught napping. His eyes are as sharp as his tongue. He saw Farmer Brown’s boy before Farmer Brown’s boy saw him, and at once scampered away from the hollow log on the edge of which he had been dancing up and down with rage, while he kept peeping inside and scolding at something in there. Now, he scampered as fast as his legs would take him to the tallest and thickest pine tree and ran up to the very top, where he was

safely hidden by the thick green top. Then he began to scold again, but this time he was scolding at Farmer Brown's boy.

Very, very carefully, for all the world as if he was treading on eggs, Farmer Brown's boy crept along between the trees of the Green Forest. Every few steps he would stop to look and listen. Every time he did this Chatterer would grow more excited and scold harder than ever.

"He's up in that big pine tree, and I wouldn't wonder a bit but what that coon is up there, too. It wasn't very far from here that Bowser and I lost track of him last night," thought Farmer Brown's boy.

When he reached the big pine tree he walked around and around it, with his freckled face tipped up until it seemed as if he must lose his balance and tumble over backward. But look as hard as ever he could he could see nothing in the big pine tree, not even Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, who always kept the trunk of the tree between himself and Farmer Brown's boy.

"No coon up there," said he aloud, in a disappointed tone of voice. Then he carefully looked through the tops of all the trees nearby, Chatterer, the Red Squirrel, following him, jumping from tree to tree and scolding all the time. Finally, Farmer Brown's boy sat down on a great hollow log to rest. Chatterer came nearer and ran out in plain sight on a branch right over Farmer Brown's boy's head, for Chatterer had discovered that the terrible gun had been left at home, and he could safely call Farmer Brown's boy all the bad names he pleased.

"Scat, you little rascal!" said Farmer Brown's boy, grinning good naturedly, as he threw a pine cone at Chatterer. "I wish you'd tell me what became of that coon."

And all the time, right underneath him in the hollow log, as Chatterer well knew, Bobby Coon was curled up tight and holding his breath.

## STORY 265. December 18, 1912.

### Granny Fox does Bobby Coon a Good Turn

"High ho! By the light of the moon  
We'll hunt and hunt the sly old coon."

So sang Farmer Brown's boy as night after night he and Bowser the Hound started for the Green Meadows. They thought it great fun, but it wasn't fun at all for Bobby Coon. Poor Bobby! He was growing thin with worrying and because he really didn't have enough to eat. He didn't go out any more than he had to, and not at all in the day time. And at night his heart was in his mouth every time he left his snug home in a great hollow chestnut tree. So far he had managed to fool Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown's boy every time, but he was afraid, dreadfully afraid, that sooner or later they would discover his tricks and then—Bobby Coon never liked to think about that time.

Now, way over in the Old Pasture, on the edge of the mountain, Granny Fox and

Reddy Fox had been living peacefully while Reddy Fox grew well and strong, for, you see, he had been badly hurt by shot from the terrible gun of Farmer Brown's boy, and that is why they had left the Green Meadows and gone to live in the Old Pasture. But Granny Fox was so used to excitement that she was growing very, very tired of this peaceful life. Now, on these moonlight nights, while Reddy Fox was hunting for his dinner old Granny Fox would steal away down to the very edge of the Old Pasture and then she would cock up her ears and listen and listen.

Way over in the Green Forest she would hear the voice of Bowser the Hound. She knew that he was following Bobby Coon's tracks. Bowser's voice would sound more and more excited, and then suddenly it would cease altogether.

"Bobby Coon's fooled them again," old Granny Fox would say, and grin.

So it went on night after night, and as she listened the face of old Granny grew grave. "This will never do! It will never, never do at all!" she thought. "Bobby Coon isn't old enough and wise enough to be able to always fool Bowser the Hound and Farmer Brown's boy, and when he does fail he won't be able to run away as Reddy and I can, for his legs are not long enough and he is too fat. I believe I will slip down there and see it I can help him out. Besides, I would dearly like a good run ahead of Bowser the Hound one of these cool nights."

So early the next evening old Granny Fox slipped away from the Old Pasture like a shadow and swiftly trotted down to the Green Forest. Before she reached there, she heard the voice of Bowser the Hound, and it sounded more eager and excited than ever. It was, for it happens that this time Bobby Coon had not fooled him, and poor Bobby, with his heart in his mouth, was running for his life, and he was making straight for his hollow tree, for he didn't know where else to go.

Suddenly Bobby found someone running beside him. It was Granny Fox.

"Climb that big pine tree over there," said old Granny Fox. "I'll lead Bowser the Hound, away. If you go to your hollow tree now Farmer Brown's boy will find it and cut it down."

"Thank you! Thank you! I'll do just as you say!" panted Bobby Coon and scrambled up the big pine tree.

STORY 266. December 19, 1912.

## Old Granny Fox Has A Good Time.

From a snug hiding place up in the top of a tall pine tree Bobby Coon looked down, where in a patch of moonlight sat old Granny Fox. The Green Forest rang with the deep voice of Bowser the Hound, and every minute it drew nearer. Bobby Coon shivered as he listened. He felt perfectly safe now, for he was sure that Granny Fox would do just as she had said she would when she had told him to climb the tall pine tree. She had promised to lead Bowser the Hound away, so that Bobby Coon need fear nothing more that night. Still Bobby shivered, for he could not help but think of what

might have happened if old Granny Fox had not come to help him. You see it was his tracks that Bowser was following, and though he could have gotten away from Bowser by climbing a tree, just as he had done, Bowser would have followed his tracks right to the tree and then have told Farmer Brown's boy.

Down in the patch of moonlight sat old Granny Fox, and her sharp face wore a broad grin. The nearer came the deep voice of Bowser the Hound the broader grew that grin. Granny Fox hadn't had any real excitement for a long time, and she was planning to have a good time fooling Bowser the Hound.

"Bow, wow, wow, w-o-w!" roared Bowser, his nose in Bobby Coon's tracks. "I'll get that Coon this time! Bow, wow, wow, w-o-w!"

Then something queer happened. It puzzled Bowser the Hound, so that he didn't know what to make of it. His nose had been filled with the smell of Bobby Coon, but all of a sudden he found that his nose was filled with the smell of Granny Fox. Bowser didn't know what to make of it. There was no mistake. The smell in those tracks he was following now was the smell of Granny Fox! Right away Bowser forgot all about Bobby Coon. You see Granny Fox was an old enemy against whom Bowser held a grudge, and little note of anger crept into Bowser's voice.

Old Granny Fox sat and grinned until Bowser broke out into the patch of moonlight, and saw her. She knew that he saw her by the great roar that he gave. Then as lightly as a shadow she darted away through the Green Forest with Bowser after her. Bobby Coon, looking down from the top of the tall pine tree, sighed happily as he watched her, for now he felt safe once more.

"Good old Granny Fox! She isn't half so bad as folks say she is," he said softly.

There's something good in everyone  
And faults in everybody, too;  
Forget the faults and see the good  
Is what we everyone should do."

And all the time that she was doing Bobby Coon such a good turn Granny Fox was having a good time herself, the kind of a good time she likes best. She ran around in circles and criss-crossed her tracks until Bowser the Hound was so mixed up that he roared angrily. Sometimes Granny sat right in plain sight, grinning as she watched Bowser trying to untangle the trail, but Bowser didn't know it. Finally, when she grew tired of this she led Bowser way, way off, until his voice could hardly be heard, and then she made him lose the trail altogether.

"I believe that old fox has come back to the Green Forest, and if she has it's no use to hunt for that Coon anymore," muttered Farmer Brown's boy in disgust as he tramped home with his terrible gun.

## STORY 267. December 20, 1912.

### Getting Ready for Winter.

There was something in the air that Peter Rabbit couldn't understand. It made him feel frisky and happy and ready to run a race or have a frolic with anyone who might happen along. He couldn't understand why it didn't make all his friends and neighbors on the Green Meadows and in the Green Forest feel the same way. But it didn't. No, sir, it didn't. Some of those with whom he best liked to play wouldn't play at all, not even for a few minutes—said they hadn't time. Peter was puzzling over it as he scampered down the Lone Little Path, kicking his heels and trying to jump over his own shadow. Just ahead of him, sitting on his own door-step, sat Johnny Chuck.

"My goodness, how fat Johnny Chuck is getting!" thought Peter Rabbit. Then he shouted: "Come on and play hide and seek, Johnny Chuck!"

But Johnny Chuck shook his head. "Can't!" said he. "I've got to get ready for winter."

Peter Rabbit sat down and looked at Johnny Chuck curiously. He couldn't understand why anybody should take the trouble to get ready for winter. He never did, excepting that he put on a warmer coat. In fact, he rather liked winter. To be sure, he had to go farther to get enough to eat, and sometimes he had to eat things that he didn't especially like, but there was always something to put in his stomach, and he is such a happy-go-lucky little fellow that he never worried about tomorrow when he's got enough for today. So he couldn't understand why Johnny Chuck should take the trouble to get ready for winter.

"How do you do it?" he asked.

"Do what?" Johnny Chuck looked up in surprise.

"Why, get ready for winter, of course," Peter replied, just a wee bit impatiently.

Johnny Chuck looked at Peter as if he thought Peter very stupid indeed.

"Why, I eat, of course," said he shortly, and began to stuff himself as if he hadn't had anything to eat for a week, when all the time he was so fat and roly-poly that he could hardly waddle.

Peter's eyes twinkled. "I should think you did!" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't mind getting ready for winter that way myself" (you know Peter thinks a very great deal of his stomach). Then he added: "I should think you were trying to eat enough to last you all winter."

Johnny Chuck yawned sleepily and then once more began to eat. "I am," he said briefly, talking with his mouth full.

"What's that?" cried Peter Rabbit, his big eyes popping out.

"I said I'm trying to eat enough to last me all winter! That's the way I get ready for winter," replied Johnny Chuck, just a wee bit crossly. "I think I've got enough now," he

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263. Chatterer the Red Squirrel Gets Excited



264. Someone Hears Chatterer the Red Squirrel



265. Granny Fox Does Bobby Coon a Good Turn



266. Old Granny Fox Has A Good Time



267. Old Granny Fox Has A Good Time



268. Peter Rabbit Gets Another Surprise

added. “How cool it is getting! I think I’ll go down and go to sleep. I’ll see you in the spring, Peter Rabbit,” he finished with a yawn.

“Wha—what’s that?” exclaimed Peter Rabbit, looking as if he thought he hadn’t heard aright. But Johnny Chuck had disappeared inside his house.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 18, “Johnny Chuck Prepares for Winter”)*

## STORY 268. December 21, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Gets Another Surprise.

Peter Rabbit sat on Johnny Chuck’s door-step for five long minutes, scratching his head first with one hand, then with the other. Johnny Chuck had disappeared inside his house yawning sleepily, and as he went he had said that he was going down to sleep and that he would see Peter Rabbit in the spring.

“Now, what did he mean by that?” said Peter Rabbit to himself. “Here it isn’t winter yet, and it will be a long, long time before spring. Yet Johnny Chuck spoke just as if he didn’t expect to see me until winter has passed. And he said that he had been getting ready for winter, by stuffing himself; and he looked as he had, for he is so fat that it was hard work for him to walk. What it all means I don’t know at all. Is he going away somewhere? If he isn’t, why won’t I see him all winter, just as I have all summer?”

The more Peter thought about it, the more puzzled he became. At last, he had a happy thought. “I’ll just run down to the Smiling Pool and ask Grandfather Frog. He is very old and very wise, and he will surely know what Johnny Chuck meant.”

So, kicking up his heels, Peter Rabbit started down the Lone Little Path, lipperty-lipperty-lip, across the Green Meadows to the Smiling Pool. There he found Grandfather Frog sitting as usual on his big lily-pad, but the lily-pad wasn’t as green as it used to be, and Grandfather Frog didn’t look as smart as usual. His big, goggly eyes with which he usually saw everything going on in the Smiling Pool looked heavy and dull, just as if they didn’t see much of anything at all. Grandfather Frog nodded sleepily and once nearly fell off the big lily-pad.

“Good morning, Grandfather Frog!” shouted Peter Rabbit.

“Eh? What?” said Grandfather Frog, blinking his eyes and putting one hand behind an ear, as if he was hard of hearing.

“I said good morning, Grandfather Frog!” shouted Peter Rabbit, a little louder than before.

“No,” replied Grandfather Frog grumpily, “it isn’t a good morning; it’s too chilly.” He shivered as he spoke.

Peter Rabbit pretended not to notice how grumpy Grandfather Frog was. In his most polite way he asked: “Can you tell me, Grandfather Frog, where Johnny Chuck



spends the winter?"

"Spends it at home, of course. Don't bother me with such foolish questions!" snapped Grandfather Frog.

"But if he is going to spend the winter at home, what did he mean by saying that he would see me in the spring, just as if he didn't expect to see me before then?" persisted Peter Rabbit.

Grandfather Frog yawned, shook himself, yawned again, and said: "Johnny Chuck probably meant just what he said, and I think I'll follow his example. It's getting too cold for an old fellow like me. I begin to feel it in my bones. I'm getting so sleepy that I guess the sooner I hunt up my bed in the mud at the bottom of the Smiling Pool the better. Chugarum! Johnny Chuck is wise. I'll see you in the spring, Peter Rabbit, and tell you all about it."

And with that, Grandfather Frog dived with a great splash into the Smiling Pool.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 19)*

## STORY 269. December 23, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit tries Ol' Mistah Buzzard

Peter Rabbit sat on the edge of the Smiling Pool and stared at the place where Grandfather Frog had disappeared with a great splash. He watched the tiny waves spread out in rings that grew bigger and bigger and then finally disappeared too. Now what did Grandfather Frog mean when he said: "I'll see you in the spring, Peter Rabbit?" Johnny Chuck had said that very same thing as he had gone down the long hall of his snug house, yet it would be a long, long time before spring, for it was not winter yet. Where did they expect to be all winter, and what did they expect to do? The more Peter puzzled over it, the less he could understand it.

My head is whirling round and round,  
So many funny things I've found;  
Folks say it grows too cold to stay,  
Yet do not seem to go away.  
They talk of meeting in the spring  
But don't explain a single thing.

"They just go into their houses and say good-bye as if they didn't expect to see me again until spring. I don't understand it at all, at all," said Peter Rabbit, staring at the big lily-pad on which Grandfather Frog had sat all summer, watching for foolish green flies to come his way. Somehow that big lily-pad made Peter Rabbit feel terribly lonely. Then he had a happy thought. "I'll just run over and ask Ol' Mistah Buzzard what it all means; he'll be sure to know," said Peter Rabbit, and off he started, lipperty-lipperty-lip, for the Green Forest.

When Peter got where he could see the tall dead tree that Ol' Mistah Buzzard had made his favorite resting-place, he could see Ol' Mistah Buzzard stretching his

big wings, as if he was getting ready to fly. Peter hurried faster than ever. He didn't want Mistah Buzzard to get away before he could ask him what Johnny Chuck and Grandfather Frog had meant when they had said that they would see him in the spring, and had spoken just as if they wouldn't see him before then. Peter couldn't shout, because he hasn't much of a voice, you know, and then he was out of breath, anyway. So he just made those long legs of his go as fast as ever they could, which is very fast indeed.

Just as Peter Rabbit almost reached the tall dead tree, Ol' Mistah Buzzard jumped off the branch he had been sitting on, gave two or three flaps with his great wings, and then, spreading them out wide, began to sail round and round and up and up, as only Ol' Mistah Buzzard can.

"Wait! Wait! Please wait!" panted Peter Rabbit, but his voice was so weak that Ol' Mistah Buzzard didn't hear him. He saw Peter, however, but of course he didn't know that Peter wanted to talk with him. With a long swoop, Ol' Mistah Buzzard sailed off right over Peter's head.

"Good-bye, Brer Rabbit; Ah'll see yo' in the spring!" said Ol' Mistah Buzzard, and before Peter could say a word, he was out of hearing up in the sky. Peter watched him go up and up until he was just a speck in the blue, blue sky.

"Now what did he mean by that? Is he going to stay up in the sky until spring?" asked Peter Rabbit of himself. But not knowing, of course he couldn't answer.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 20)*

## STORY 270. December 24, 1912.

### Happy Jack Squirrel is Too Busy to Talk.

Peter Rabbit sat with his mouth wide open staring up into the blue, blue sky, where Ol' Mistah Buzzard was growing smaller and smaller. Finally he was just a teeny, weeny speck, and then Peter couldn't see him at all. Peter hitched up his trousers and sat for a long time, looking very thoughtful. He was troubled in his mind, was Peter Rabbit. First Johnny Chuck had said: "I'll see you in the spring," and had disappeared underground; then Grandfather Frog had said: "I'll see you in the spring," and had disappeared in the Smiling Pool; now Ol' Mistah Buzzard had said: "Ah'll see yo' in the spring," and had disappeared up in the blue, blue sky.

"And they all spoke just as if they meant it and didn't expect to see me until spring," said Peter to himself. "I believe I'll go over and see Happy Jack Squirrel. Perhaps he can tell me what it all means."

So off started Peter Rabbit, lipperty-lipperty-lip, through the Green Forest, looking for Happy Jack Squirrel. Pretty soon he caught a glimpse of Happy Jack's gray coat.

"Hi, Happy Jack!" called Peter, hurrying as fast as he could.

"Hello, Peter Rabbit! Don't bother me this morning. I've got too much to do to be

bothered,” said Happy Jack, digging a little hole in the ground while he talked.

Peter grew curious at once, so curious that he forgot all about what he was going to ask Happy Jack. He sat down and watched Happy Jack put a nut in the hole and cover it up. Then Happy Jack hurried to dig another hole and do the same thing over again.

“What are you doing that for?” asked Peter Rabbit.

“Doing it for? Why, I’m getting ready for winter, of course, stupid!” said Happy Jack, as he paused for breath.

“But I thought you stored your nuts and corn in a hollow tree!” exclaimed Peter Rabbit.

“So I do,” replied Happy Jack, “but I would be foolish to put all my supplies in one place, so I bury some of them.”

“But how do you remember where you bury them?” persisted Peter.

“I don’t always, but when I forget, my nose helps me out. Then I just dig down and get them,” said Happy Jack. “Now I can’t stop to talk any more, for I am late this year, and the first thing I know winter will be here.”

Then Peter remembered what he had come for. “Oh, Happy Jack, what did Johnny Chuck and Grandfather Frog and Ol’ Mistah Buzzard mean by saying that they would see me in the spring?” he cried.

“Can’t stop to tell you now!” replied Happy Jack, running this way and that way, and pulling over the fallen leaves to hunt for another nut. “Winter’s coming, and I’ve got to be ready for it. Can’t stop to talk.”

And that was all Peter Rabbit could get out of him, although he followed Happy Jack about and bothered him with questions until Happy Jack quite lost his temper. Peter sighed. He saw Chatterer the Red Squirrel and Striped Chipmunk both quite as busy as Happy Jack.

“It’s of no use to ask them, for they are doing the same thing that Happy Jack is,” thought Peter. “I don’t see the use of all this fuss about winter, anyway. I don’t have to get ready for it. I believe I’ll go down to the Smiling Pool again and see if maybe Grandfather Frog has come up after all.”

*(Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 21)*

## STORY 271. December 26, 1912.

### Unc’ Billy Possum explains things to Peter Rabbit

Peter Rabbit had sat still all day long in his safe hiding-place in the middle of the dear, dear old briar patch. Jolly, round, red Mr. Sun had gone to bed behind the Purple Hills, and the black shadows had raced out across the Green Meadows and into the Green Forest. Now the moonlight was driving them back a little way. Peter hopped out of the Old Briar-patch into the moonlight and stretched first one leg and then another.

Then he jumped up and down three or four times to get the kinks out of his long hind legs, and finally started off up the Lone Little Path, lipperty-lipperty-lip.

Half way up the Lone Little Path Peter almost ran headlong into Unc' Billy Possum.

"Mah goodness, Brer Rabbit, yo'all done give me a powerful start!" exclaimed Unc' Billy. "What yo'all in such a right smart hurry fo'?"

Peter Rabbit grinned as he stopped running. "I didn't mean to frighten you, Uncle Billy. The fact is, I was on my way up to your house to see how you and old Mrs. Possum and all the children do this fine fall weather," said Peter Rabbit.

Unc' Billy Possum looked at Peter Rabbit sharply. "Seems to me that yo'all have taken a powerful sudden interest in we-alls. Ah doan remember seeing you up our way fo' a long time, Brer Rabbit," said he.

Peter looked a little foolish, for it was true that he hadn't been near Unc' Billy's hollow tree for a long time. "You see, I've been very busy getting ready for winter," said Peter, by way of an excuse.

Unc' Billy began to chuckle and then to laugh. He rested both hands on his knees and laughed and laughed. Peter Rabbit couldn't see anything to laugh at and he began to get just a wee bit provoked. "What's the joke?" he demanded.

"The very idea of Brer Rabbit getting ready for winter or of being busy about anything but other people's affairs!" cried Unc' Billy, wiping his eyes.

Peter tried to feel and to look very angry, but he couldn't. No, sir, he couldn't. The very twinkle in Unc' Billy Possum's eyes made Peter want to laugh, too. In fact Peter just had to laugh. Finally both stopped laughing, and Peter told Unc' Billy all about the things that had troubled him.

"Johnny Chuck disappeared down in his house and said he would see me in the spring; what did he mean by that?" asked Peter.

"Just what he said," replied Unc' Billy. "He done gone down to his bed and gone to sleep, and he's gwine to stay asleep until next spring."

Peter's eyes looked as if they would pop right out of his head. "And Grandfather Frog, what has become of him?" he asked.

"Oh, Grandfather Frog, he done take care of hisself, alright. He done gone to sleep, too, down in the mud at the bottom of the Smiling Pool. Ah reckon yo' will see Grandfather Frog come up right pert in the spring," said Unc' Billy.

"And Ol' Mistah Buzzard; he shouted down from the blue, blue sky that he would see me in the spring; has he gone to sleep up there?" asked Peter.

Unc' Billy Possum threw back his head and laughed fit to kill himself.

"Bless yo' long ears, no, Brer Rabbit! No indeed! Oh my, no! Brer Buzzard doan go to sleep up in the sky! He done fly away down souf to ol' Virginy to stay through

the cold winter. And ah most wish ah was right along with him,” added Unc’ Billy, suddenly growing sober. Then Peter Rabbit had a sudden thought.

“You aren’t going away to sleep all winter, are you, Uncle Billy?” he asked anxiously.

The grin came back to Unc’ Billy’s face. “No, Brer Rabbit. Ah reckons yo’ all can find me right in mah hollow tree most any time this winter, if yo’ knock loud enough. But ah doan reckon on going out much, and ah do reckon ah’m going to have a right smart lot of sleep,” replied Unc’ Billy.

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 22, “Unc’ Billy Possum explains things”)*

## STORY 272. December 27, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit Finds Some One Else is Busy

Peter Rabbit actually felt lonesome. He had nothing in particular to do and he wanted to play, but there was no one to play with. Happy Jack the Gray Squirrel, Chatterer the Red Squirrel and Striped Chipmunk were so busy that they couldn’t even stop to talk, to say nothing of play. They were getting ready for winter. Even Whitefoot the Wood Mouse was doing the same thing. Peter watched them a while, but it actually tired him to watch them run back and forth so fast.

“I’ll just run down to the Smiling Pool again and see if perhaps, after all, Grandfather Frog was fooling when he said that he would see me again in the spring; just as if he wouldn’t see me until then,” thought Peter and started off down the Lone Little Path, lipperty-lipperty-lip.

When he reached the Smiling Pool he looked eagerly for Grandfather Frog. There was the big lily pad on which Grandfather Frog had sat all summer, but it was bare and forlorn looking now. Somehow it gave Peter still more of a lonesome feeling and a queer little lump crept up in Peter’s throat.

He was just about to turn back to the Green Meadows when he saw a little brown head in the Smiling Pool. Peter’s face brightened.

“Hello there, Jerry Muskrat!” he shouted.

Jerry didn’t say a word. He couldn’t, for you see his mouth was full of sweet flag root. Instead he dived right close to his splendid big house. A minute later his little brown head bobbed up again. He had left the flag root.

“Hello, Peter Rabbit!” said he. “What makes you look so sober? You look as if you had lost your last friend. “

I haven’t yet, and shall not as long as you are here,” grinned Peter. “But I seem to be losing them pretty fast,” he added sadly.

“How is that?” asked Jerry, climbing up on the roof of his house.

Then Peter Rabbit poured out all his troubles to Jerry Muskrat. He told how Johnny Chuck has disappeared down in the ground, and Grandfather Frog had disappeared in the Smiling Pool, and Old Mistah Buzzard had disappeared in the blue, blue sky, and how each had promised to see him in the spring. Then he told how Happy Jack Squirrel and Chatterer the Red Squirrel and Striped Chipmunk were so busy getting ready for winter that they couldn't stop to play or even answer questions.

“And I don't understand it at all,” Peter ended.

Jerry Muskrat looked at the troubled face of Peter Rabbit and laughed,

“You're just the same old Peter, worrying about something that doesn't concern you in the least, aren't you?” cried Jerry. “If you don't have to prepare for winter you ought to think yourself very lucky. Now I do. That is the reason that I built this house and that is the reason that I have got to go after some more flag root right now.”

Splash! Jerry Muskrat had disappeared and once more Peter Rabbit was sitting all alone on the bank of the Smiling Pool. Peter waited a little while, but Jerry did not return. Then slowly Peter Rabbit hopped away across the Green Meadows to the dear old brier patch, where he sat and thought and thought all the rest of that day.

## STORY 273. December 28, 1912.

### Peter Rabbit has a bright idea.

Peter Rabbit had a bright idea. At least Peter thought it was a bright idea, and he chuckled over it a great deal. The more he thought about it, the better it seemed. What was it? Why, to follow the plan of Johnny Chuck and Grandfather Frog to avoid the cold, stormy weather by sleeping all winter. Yes, sir, that was Peter Rabbit's bright idea.

If Johnny Chuck can sleep and sleep  
The whole long, stormy winter through,  
It ought to be, it seems to me,  
The very thing for me to do.

Peter Rabbit said this to himself, as he sat in the middle of the old brier patch, chewing the end of a straw. If Johnny Chuck could do it, of course he could do it. All he would have to do would be to find a snug, warm house which nobody else was using, fix himself a comfortable bed, curl up, and go to sleep. Peter tried to picture himself sleeping away while the snow lay deep all over the Green Meadows and the Smiling Pool could smile no more because the ice, the hard, black ice, would not let it. Finally Peter could sit still no longer. He just had to tell some one about his bright idea and—and—well, he wasn't quite sure of just the way to go to sleep and sleep so long, for never in his life had Peter Rabbit slept more than a very, very short time without waking to see that no danger was near.

“I'll just run up and see Uncle Billy Possum!” said Peter.

Unc' Billy Possum was sitting in his doorway in his big, hollow tree in the Green Forest when Peter Rabbit came hurrying up, lipperty-lipperty-lip. Peter hardly waited

Illustrations. December 23 to December 28, 1912.



269. Peter Rabbit Tries Ol' Mistah Buzzard



270. Happy Jack Squirrel is Too Busy to Talk



271. Unc' Billy Possum Explains Things to Peter Rabbit



272. Peter Rabbit Finds Some One Else is Busy



273. Peter Rabbit Has a Bright Idea

to say good morning before he began to tell Unc' Billy all about his bright idea. Unc' Billy listened gravely, although there was a twinkle in his eyes.

"The first thing yo' must do is to find a warm place to sleep, Brer Rabbit," said Unc' Billy.

"Oh, that's easy enough!" said Peter Rabbit.

"And then yo' must get fat, Brer Rabbit," continued Unc' Billy.

"What's that?" exclaimed Peter Rabbit, looking very much puzzled.

"Ah say yo' must get fat," repeated Unc' Billy, slapping his own fat sides.

"What for?" asked Peter.

"To keep yo' warm while yo' are asleep," replied Unc' Billy.

"Must I get very fat?" Peter asked,

"Yes, sah, yo' must get very fat indeed," said Unc' Billy, and smiled, for it was hard to think of Peter Rabbit as very fat.

"How—how can I get fat?" asked Peter, and looked just a little bit worried.

"By eating and eating and eating, and between times sitting still," replied Unc' Billy Possum.

"That's easy, at least the eating is!" said Peter, who, you know, thinks a great deal of his stomach. "Is that all, Uncle Billy?"

"That's about all, excepting yo' mustn't have anything on yo' mind when yo' try to go to sleep, Brer Rabbit. Yo' mustn't get to worrying fo' fear Brer Fox gwine to find yo' while yo' are asleep," said Unc' Billy, and grinned when Peter happened to turn his head.

Peter thanked Unc' Billy and hurried back to the old brier patch to think over all that Unc' Billy had told him. It seemed easy enough.

"I'll try it," said Peter Rabbit. "I certainly'll try it."

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 23)*

## STORY 274. December 30, 1912.

### Peter Prepares to Sleep all Winter.

Peter Rabbit had fully made up his mind that he would sleep all winter. That would be such a splendid way to forget all about the cold wind and the ice and the storms. "Johnny Chuck does it and Grandfather Frog does it and Bobby Coon sleeps a large part of the winter; why shouldn't I?" said Peter to himself.

So day after day Peter Rabbit ran about this way and that over the Green Meadows and through the Green Forest, as if he had something on his mind. Jimmy Skunk noticed it. So did Billy Mink and Bobby Coon. But Peter wouldn't stop to explain.



Indeed, he was always in such a hurry that he wouldn't stop at all, but when he met them would shout "Hello!" over his shoulder and keep right on running, lipperty-lipperty-lip. Unc' Billy Possum was the only one who guessed what it meant. You see, Peter Rabbit had been up to Unc' Billy to find out what Johnny Chuck and Grandfather Frog meant when they had said that they would see Peter in the spring, and it was Unc' Billy who had told Peter how they sleep all winter.

Unc' Billy grinned as he watched Peter running about with such a serious and important air. "Brer Rabbit, he trying dreadful hard to fool hisself. Ah reckon he's looking fo' a place to curl up and try to sleep all winter," said Unc' Billy to himself.

Unc' Billy had guessed just right. Peter was looking for a place to curl up to sleep all winter. Peter was too lazy to dig a new house for himself. Then it was too late in the fall, anyway. He would just find some old, deserted house that some of Jimmy Skunk's relatives or Johnny Chuck's relations had given up using. So Peter went poking into every old house he knew of, trying to find one that wasn't so tumble down that it wouldn't do. At last he found one that he thought would be just the place, and Peter chuckled to himself as he planned how he would curl up in the bedchamber, way down at the end of the long hall.

"Nobody'll ever guess where I am!" he said to himself and laughed aloud. Then Peter remembered that Unc' Billy Possum had told him that it was necessary to eat a great deal so as to be very fat before going to sleep, for that was the way to keep warm all winter. So Peter, having decided where he would sleep, started out to grow fat. This would be fun, the very best kind of fun, for there is nothing Peter Rabbit loves more than to fill his stomach, unless it is to satisfy his curiosity.

Peter Rabbit's stomach is  
A thing that's most amazing;  
It takes so long to fill it up  
His time is short for lazing.

Perhaps this is the reason why, when Peter isn't eating, he wants to loaf around and watch other people work. Anyway, Peter is a tremendous eater, and now that he wanted to grow fat, he felt that he must eat more than ever. So he began at once to eat and eat and eat. But there was one very important thing that Peter had forgotten. He had quite forgotten that it was now late in the fall, and the tender, young, green things which Peter dearly loves to eat were gone. He could no longer go down to the sweet clover patch and fill himself full to bursting. Farmer Brown had taken away all the cabbages and carrots and turnips that had made his garden so attractive to Peter.

So now Peter had to hunt for what he had to eat. That made a great deal of running about, and it is very hard work to grow fat when one runs about. The more Peter ate, the more he had to hunt for his food; and the more he had to hunt for his food, the more he had to run about; and the more he had to run about, the more he hurried and the faster he ran. Now, of course running takes fat off.

"Oh, dear!" cried Peter Rabbit. "Getting fat is not as easy as I thought!"

*(The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Chapter 24, "Peter Prepares for a Long*

Sleep”)

STORY 275. December 31, 1912.

## Peter Rabbit Tries to Sleep

Peter Rabbit sat in the doorway of the old deserted house that Grandfather Skunk had dug long ago. He was wondering when he had better go to sleep for the winter. He never had slept all winter, but if Johnny Chuck could do it Peter felt sure that he could. He had been through all the old houses of which he knew and this one which Grandfather Skunk had moved out of long, long ago was the best. So Peter had cleaned out the bedroom at the end of the long hall, and had decided that he would be safe and comfortable here and that he could hardly find a better place to spend the winter.

One thing worried Peter. Unc' Billy Possum had told him that he should eat and eat and eat, until he was very fat indeed, so as to keep warm all winter. Peter remembered how fat Johnny Chuck was the last time he saw him. Peter had tried to do just as Unc' Billy had said. He hadn't minded eating. Oh, my, no! He hadn't minded eating, not the least little bit. You see, Peter thanks a great deal of his stomach and he had rather eat than do anything else, unless it is to listen to other folks' affairs.

So Peter had started out very happily to eat and grow fat. But that wasn't as easily done as he had thought it would be. You see, It was so late in the season that he had to run about a great deal to find plenty to eat. Of course, being in a hurry to grow fat, he ran as fast as he could from one eating place to another. Now, running and worrying take fat off instead of putting it on, and here was Peter Rabbit, this could morning sitting in the doorway of the old house with less fat on him than when he had first thought of sleeping all winter. It was very discouraging.

Peter looked around through the Green Forest. It wasn't green any more, excepting where the pine and hemlock trees grew. All the other trees were bare; their leaves made a brown carpet over the ground. All the little bushes were bare. Between the tree trunks Peter could see down on the Green Meadows. Even these were green no longer, but were yellow and brown. Peter shivered a little, for it was cold, and jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was hiding behind big dark clouds.

“I just won't wait any longer,” said Peter. “I'll go down and go to sleep now, and forget all about the winter.”

So he turned around and crept back to the little bedchamber at the end of the long, dark hall, and there he curled himself up and closed his eyes to sleep all winter. But somehow Peter didn't feel a bit sleepy. In the first place, he never had tried to sleep curled up this way before. He usually slept crouched in a little bunch, already to jump at the first alarm, and somehow he couldn't feel easy curled up this way.

Then Peter got to thinking. What was that Unc' Billy had said about not worrying for fear Granny Fox or Reddy Fox might find him there? Of course, he wasn't going to worry. Neither Granny Fox nor Reddy Fox would think of looking in that old house for him. And yet, supposing, just supposing, they should just happen to, why, they would—

Peter didn't like to think just what they would do. But the more he tried not to think the more he did think. Finally, he tried to put himself to sleep by saying over and over again:

“Sleepy sle-epy, s-l-e-e-p-y!  
That is how I feel.  
Creepy cre-epy, c-r-e-e-p-y  
Shadows round me steal.”

Somehow those “creepy shadows” didn't make him feel a bit more sleepy, although, of course, there couldn't be any shadows down where Peter was because it was dark as night there. But Peter kept saying the verse over and over to try to make himself sleepy. Then, right in the middle of it, he said: “What's that?” right out loud, and sat up so suddenly that he bumped his head.

Peter had heard a noise.

Illustrations. December 30 to December 31, 1912.



274. Peter Prepares to Sleep All Winter



275. Peter Rabbit Tries to Sleep

# Appendix 1. The Promotion and Reception of Thornton W. Burgess and Little Stories for Bedtime in 1912

This appendix includes articles and advertisements in newspapers during 1912 that promoted Thornton W. Burgess and his publications and provide insight into their reception during the year. "Little Stories for Bedtime," while not a part of the earliest promotions for the Associated Newspaper syndicate, was quickly incorporated into them. Letters to the editors praising the story feature were printed as early as March and interest among educators was also reported. By September, the *Kansas City Star* was reporting the popularity of the stories and characters among school children. The promotion of *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends* appears to have included a biographical fact sheet and photograph of Burgess; this was reprinted in various ways by newspapers. In October, the *Washington Star* asked readers to evaluate the story feature. Presumably the feedback was positive as the stories continued to be printed.

## **Notice in *Omaha Evening World-Herald*, February 19, 1912. Page 1.**

### TO WOMEN READERS

The *World-Herald* calls attention to the special features for women and children which are a part of this great family daily.

These features are GOOD, CLEAN, PROFITABLE AND ENTERTAINING...

THORNTON W. BURGESS with his "Little Stories for Bedtime" furnishes an opportunity for every mother to interest the little ones.

Good, clean reading is an inspiration in the home, and if it be practical, the household is bound to profit by it.

## **Editorial in *Omaha World-Herald*, March 13, 1912. Page 6.**

### A BIG NEWSPAPER PURPOSE....

"The comics and cartoons of Darling, Webster, Goldsmith and others, the contributions of Elizabeth Lee, Louise D. Mitchell, Frank Crane, and the popular "Bed Time Stories" are some of the products of the efforts of these Associated Newspapers."

## **Letter to the Editor, *Houston Chronicle*, March 18, 1912. Page 1.**

### CHRONICLE FEATURE IS GIVEN HIGH PRAISE

To the Editor of the Chronicle.

Just to tell you how very much I appreciate "Little Stories for Bedtime," by Thornton W. Burgess appearing daily in the Chronicle. My children expect this story every night and it has become almost as great necessity as the little "nightie" and slumber slippers. The kindergarten department of our public school is using the stories, adopting them as classics.

Burgess rivals Joel Chandler Harris in his easy delightful manner, and understanding of the child-mind.

Keep them going. Please do. Yours very truly.

J.W. Butler. Clifton Texas

**Omaha World-Herald, March 23, 1912. Page 1.**

TEACHERS MAKE USE OF "BED TIME STORIES"

The "Little Stories for Bed Time," by Thornton W. Burgess, which are running daily in the *World-Herald*, have made a big hit with the youngsters, according to numerous communications to this newspaper.

Little Richard Hyde, 6-year old son of C.B. Hyde, 2137 North Forty-first street, clipped them out to show to his teacher, and now Miss Graham is reading them to the children in the first reader class at Clifton Hill school. Other teachers are making use of this popular juvenile feature.

**Letter to "Uncle Ross" editor of the *World-Herald's* Children's Page. *Omaha World-Herald*, March 24, 1912. Page 40.**

"A NEW BOOK"

[My sister] is ... reading the bedtime stories about Johnnie Chuck and Peter Rabbit in the *World-Herald* to me.

Your nephew, Roger Furay.

**Voice of the People, *Houston Chronicle*, April 8, 1912, Page 4.**

THOSE "LITTLE STORIES FOR BEDTIME."

To the Editor of the Chronicle.

I just drop you a line to say your "Little Stories for Bedtime," by Thornton W. Burgess, are a success.

I have tried them out on two young gentlemen of my household, aged 5 and 7 respectively, and it would do your heart good to see them down on the floor after supper turning the pages of the paper searching for their story. I am prompted to write you for the reason that I am one of those fellows who believe that one little lonesome flower handed to a living man is worth a carload piled upon his grave.

Wishing you success, I am, yours very truly,

J.N. Fallis Clifton, Texas.

***Kansas City Star*, September 17, 1912. Page 3A.**

ALL IN REDDY FOX ROLES

SCHOOL-CHILDREN HERE FIND A NEW MAKE-BELIEVE WORLD

A Visitor Passing a South Side Playground Yesterday Heard Pupils Calling Each Other by the "Bedtime Stories" Hero Names.

The "Bedtime Stories" by Thornton W. Burgess, which are being published in *The Star*, are gaining in popularity among the children of Kansas City. Every day telephone calls come and letters arrive at the office asking about the queer little animals that Mr. Burgess has succeeded in making so real to his youthful readers, and to grown-ups too, for that matter.

The slight interruption in the series a week or so ago [August 30 to September 3] brought an unusual number of inquiries and only their resumption ended the deluge of solicitude expressed for the safe return of Reddy Fox and the other inhabitants of the Green Forest.

A man was passing a South Side school ground the other day.

REDDY FOX HIS ONLY NAME

“Where’s Reddy Fox? He has to be here or we can’t play,” a voice said.  
“Somebody c’n go ‘n get him. Let me go, Peter Rabbit,” a fat boy, who, it developed, had been dubbed Johnny Chuck, spoke up eagerly.  
“Naw, you stay here,” Peter Rabbit said, “ ‘sides nobody knows where he lives.”  
“What’s his name and I c’n find him,” persisted Johnny Chuck.  
“Reddy Fox is all the name he’s got,” and, strange to say, Peter Rabbit was right; nobody knew the missing Reddy Fox by any other except his chosen name.  
“And has everybody got new names?” the listener interposed. The youthful scorn of ignorance was apparent. Peter Rabbit looked him up and down.  
“Get wise, mister,” he said, “we’ve all changed our names. There’s Jimmy Skunk, and there’s Bobby Coon,” and Peter Rabbit pointed out successively a half dozen different characters that appear regularly in the Little Bedtime Stories.

#### THE AUTHOR A MASSACHUSETTS MAN

Thornton Waldo Burgess, who is writing the “Bedtime Stories,” lives in Springfield, Mass., and is 38 years old. He has been connected with the editorial staff of the Phelps Publishing Company, and until last year was associate editor of Good Housekeeping. He is a frequent contributor to magazines and has published these books: *The Bride’s Primer*, *Old Mother West Wind*, and *Mother West Wind’s Children*.

#### **Gossip About Makers of Books and Their Work, *Oakland Tribune*, September 8, 1912, Page 10.**

##### ANIMAL FRIENDS

“Mother West Wind’s Animal Friends” is by Thornton Burgess, author of “Old Mother West Wind” (Little, Brown & Co.)  
Old Mother West Wind, The Merry Little Breezes and all the familiar little folk of field and forest appear again in Mr. Burgess’ new volume. Johnny Chuck and Peter Rabbit are full of mischief, and have no end of good times with Reddy Fox, Sammy Jay, Danny Meadow Mouse and all their other play fellows in the green meadows and on the edge of the green forest. Old Mother West Wind still sends the Merry Little Breezes on errands and Grandfather Frog, from his lily pads in the smiling pool, tells stories of the days when the world was young to the curious little people on the shore. New little animals also come to join the colony. This is a book of the jolliest stories imaginable, and little readers will get much enjoyment from them, especially at bed time. As in the previous volumes, the illustrations [by George Kerr] add greatly to the attractiveness of the book.

#### **New Publications, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 5, 1912. Page 9.**

“Mother West Winds’ Animal Friends,” by Thornton W. Burgess (Little, Brown & Co., Boston; \$1), is a fairy story of animals and outdoor things, designed for children 8 or 10 years old, and has something of the charm which made the “Uncle Remus” stories so widely popular.

#### **Authors and Their Ways, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 5, 1912. Page 8.**

An author who has made a success with animal stories for bedtime reading is Thornton W. Burgess, who lives in Springfield, Mass. Born in the town of Sandwich in 1874, the creator of “Old Mother West Wind” spent nineteen years

in his home town on old Cape Cod in the woods and fields where were laid the foundations of his strong love of nature and the outdoor life. After a few years in business life he became one of the editorial force of the Phelps Publishing and Orange Judd companies of Springfield, Mass. For some years he was one of the editors of Good Housekeeping magazine and wrote extensively for this publication.

***Kansas City Star, October 7, 1912. Page 14.***

THE GREEN FOREST REPORTER

The Fields and Woods Familiar to Thornton W. Burgess

An author who has made a distinct success with his animal stories for bedtime reading is Thornton W. Burgess, who lives in Springfield, Mass. Born in the town of Sandwich in 1874, the creator of "Old Mother West Wind" spent nineteen years in his home town on Old Cape Cod in the woods and fields where were laid the foundations of his strong love of nature and the outdoor life. For some years he was one of the editors of Good Housekeeping magazine and wrote extensively for this publication. Mr. Burgess has been a frequent contributor to many of the leading magazines and over the name of W. B. Thornton has won recognition as a writer on outdoor themes and nature topics.

But it is as a writer of bedtime stories for little folk that Mr. Burgess is best known. His animal stories have proven to be immensely popular with readers of *The Star*, and there are thousands of children who demand to hear each night more about Johnny Chuck, Reddy Fox, Grandfather Frog, Billy Mink and the host of other small denizens of the fields and woods.

Already three books of Mr. Burgess's "Mother West Wind" stories have been published, including "Mother West Wind's Children," which is just out. The American Library Association has indorsed his work, while schools have adopted his books for supplementary reading. Mr. Burgess is one f the few writers who successfully presents in pure story form many of the habits and characteristics of the animals which frequent the meadows and adjoining woodland to the end that the child may be taught as well as entertained. In fact, it was for the entertainment of his own child that Mr. Burgess commenced to write these animal tales.

**Stories by a Local Author, *Springfield Republican*, October 13, 1912. Page 15.**

THE "OLD MOTHER WEST WIND" SERIES FOR SMALL CHILDREN, BY THORNTON W. BURGESS

Thornton W. Burgess of this city has just added a third volume to his fascinating "Old Mother West Wind" series of stories for small children... These stories are intended for children from 6 to 11 and they would hardly arouse Col Roosevelt's ire against nature faking. They are delightful little fancies told with the true storyteller's spirit, and it is difficult to imagine anything which would better hold a small audience than the account of how "Prickly Porky," the porcupine got his quills, or various other of the sketches which personify the creatures of the forest and field and lend to them and to the breezes the power of speech. Mr. Burgess for some time to come will probably be added, perhaps right after the good cook who makes extra doughnuts, for more than one lisping bedside petition for a heavenly blessing.



**Reviews of Books, *Boston Globe*, October 14, 1912. Page 11.**

STIMULATES IMAGINATION.

“MOTHER WEST WINDS’ ANIMAL FRIENDS” JUST THE NATURE BOOK FOR THE YOUNGSTERS.

...The children of this generation are particularly fortunate in having such well-written books on a plane which they can understand and thoroughly appreciate....

***New York Sun*, October 19, 1912. Page 16.**

HE DOES ANIMAL STORIES.

Yarns That Have Made Many Children Go Contentedly to Bed.

An author who has made a distinct success with his animal stories for bedtime reading is Thornton W. Burgess....[same press release as *Kansas City Star*, October 7, 1912, except for localization]

***Washington Sunday Star*, October 27, 1912, Page 72.**

[note appended to the day’s story.] (To Parents: In order to determine the popularity of Little Stories for Bedtime, The Star would like to hear from its readers whether or not they enjoy this feature, and why. Address Children’s Editor. The Star.)

**The News of the New Books. *Kansas City Star*, December 10, 1912. Page 20.**

A BOOK BY THE AUTHOR OF THE “BEDTIME STORIES.”

Thornton W. Burgess takes first rank among those who are building up an extensive literature around the Boy Scout movement. Many others have written more, but none has written better than he in “The Boy Scouts of Woodcraft Camp.” He knows boys, he knows the woods and streams and their creatures and he has woven these into a charming story for boys 10 to 15 years old. After the many incidents of hunting, fishing and camping and the excursions in the woods and on the streams, boy readers will be as sorry to leave the story as the scouts were to leave the camp. And older readers will agree with the fathers that the boys lived the real life and that the camp was “man factory.”

All the delight that little children take in Mr. Burgess’s “Little Stories for Bedtime,” which are running in The Star, will be aroused in older boys by the story of Woodcraft Camp, and they will be impatient for his other story, “The Boys Scouts of Swift River,” which is now in press....

***Los Angeles Express*, December 18, 1912.**

LIKED BY LITTLE ONES. TELLS ANIMAL STORIES

Thornton W. Burgess Well Known to Thousands of Children Through Bedtime Tales in The Express.

An author who has made a distinct success with his animal stories for bedtime reading is Thornton W. Burgess....[same press release as *Kansas City Star*, October 7, 1912, except for localization]

Appendix 1. Illustrations accompanying Burgess Profiles.



Illustration accompanying "The Green Forest Reporter," *Kansas City Star*, October 7, 1912.



Illustration accompanying "Liked by Little Ones," *Los Angeles Express*, December 18, 1912.

## Appendix 2. Thornton W. Burgess's Hunting and Trapping Narratives

Before writing "Little Stories for Bedtime," Burgess wrote occasionally about killing wild animals for sport and profit. Three examples are included here that inform episodes in the feature during 1912. The first, written while he was Young Folks' Editor for the *American Agriculturist*, details some of his trapping experiences. The other two examples were written for *Country Life in America* under his "W. B. Thornton" pen-name. The first is about hunting raccoons (see STORY 256 in this volume) and the second is about fox and rabbit hunting.

### **Trapping Chat by *Young Folks' Editor***

Well, boys, there seems to be a whole lot of interest among you in this trapping chat! Some of you are catching on to the idea of just what is wanted, namely, practical accounts of your methods. If you are more successful than other boys in the catching of any one particular animal, it must be because you have methods peculiarly your own. Let us have those methods.

#### MUSKRATS

The first fur animal I ever caught was, not unnaturally, a muskrat. This little animal, in some sections called "musksquash," and scientifically known as *Fiber zibethicus*, is so widely distributed that throughout much of North America he is a familiar denizen of ponds, rivers and swampy places. In appearance and methods of life he is almost like a small edition of the beaver, with this exception: the beaver hates the presence of man, while the muskrat, though hunted and trapped persistently, has held his own within the bounds of civilization.

In many places the muskrat becomes a pest, particularly where dikes are needed to hold water in check for any purpose. In the cranberry region of Cape Cod, where the Young Folks Editor spent his boyhood, muskrats wrought so much damage to the cranberry meadow dikes that the town offered a bounty. This in addition to the price of the fur made the little animal well worth pursuing.

The habits of the muskrat are so well known to all our boys that it hardly seems necessary to describe them. He is not a difficult animal to trap. I note that some of our boy readers complain that they have lost many of these little animals through having them gnaw off their legs after being caught. I had this same experience when I first began trapping. Then I learned to set my trap in such a way and in such a place that the animal, after springing the trap, would plunge into the water. This always resulted in a drowned muskrat. It was more merciful to the animal, and it saved the fur for me always. Many of the boys write that they bait with apples. Did you ever try carrot?

*American Agriculturist*. February 23, 1907.

### **Coon Hunting by W. B. Thornton**

Peculiarly a November sport, though often it has its beginning in October, is the

pursuit of Br'er Coon. You who have never followed a coon in the dead watches of the night, take you straightway into the circle of your companionship the owner of a coon dog. A coon dog is born, not made. Usually he is a mongrel, with a bit of the bull and a bit of the hound in him. Rabbit and fox he will have none of, but the scent of a raccoon loosens his tongue to the full cry. It is a weird sensation, the first coon hunt. With a shot-gun in the party, a revolver or two, and every man supplied with a lantern and plenty of matches, you enter the black fastness of the forest. The dog is loosed and swallowed up in darkness the instant he crosses the narrow circle of your lantern light. Silent you sit on an old log, for a woodland at night is not conducive to a freeing of the tongue. The stillness, unbroken save for the occasional rustling of leaves or impatient snuff betraying the whereabouts of the dog, enters your very soul. There is a peculiar sense of loneliness, a consciousness of being but an atom in a universe of blackness. It walls you in on all sides, impenetrable. Only above is it broken, and there immeasurable distance reaches up to the cold twinkling points of light in a frosty November sky. Suddenly out of the darkness rises a weird sound, uncannily suggestive of a little lost child crying in the wilderness. Then the dog, unraveling a trail, suddenly gives tongue, and the music of the hunt rolls through the woodland aisles.

Now he circles toward you, and now he starts straight away at a pace which demands that you follow.

Straight into the blackness beyond you plunge. The yellow gleams of the lantern hardly show the way ten feet ahead. Down through the swamp and the laurel tangles leads the chase; at times, so thick becomes the laurel that hands and knees seem the only method of progress. A ruffed grouse, aroused from its slumber, springs up, with a rush of wings, in your very face. Startling enough by daylight are these swift-winged flyers, but when, without warning, out of the blackness, brushing your very face, they speed into the night, it gives the stoutest heart a mighty jump. Fainter and fainter sounds the music of the dog. It is a mad race now, over moldering tree trunks, through swampy patches, up over the ridges, through the old chestnut grove and down into the hollow beyond. It is each one for himself, for each I would fain be first in when the game is treed. Listen! From over yonder hill comes a new note. There is less of music in it, but there is a steady purpose which tells its own story. The game is treed. What will it be – a veteran old chestnut rotted at the top, which will necessitate the smoking out of Mr. Coon; a big pine without a limb for fifty feet, which will necessitate a good nerve and a proper use of the climbing-irons; or will it be an easy tree, from which Mr. Coon can be shaken with- out difficulty?

It was exciting before; it is doubly so now. You forget the lack of breath, the scratches from the brambles, the tumbles over hidden roots. Listen! Steadily, unceasingly, the dog barks. No danger of Mr. Coon slipping out now. He is treed, and old Bob proposes to see that he stays treed. There he is at the foot of yonder chestnut, looking up into the towering branches and impatiently scratching at the base of the tree. A flash from the lantern on the rough bark shows the claw marks which proclaim that old Bob has made no mistake. Now for the climbing-irons and a long string to lower for the lantern. That tree would be a "phaser" by daylight in the dark there is no thought of its height or size. Up you go, looking along each branch as you come to it.

Somewhere, unless, perchance, the wily animal has leaped to a neighboring tree, he is hiding close against the rough bark. There, clear at the top, you see him in the flash of the lantern. Now for the revolver and a good eye. Old Bob, at the foot of the tree, knows as well as you what that sharp, ringing shot in the tree-top means, and, alert and ready, he pounces on the heavy body that falls at his feet.

So the night wanes. Now a coon is lost on the ridges. Again, one is startled at his fishing or jumped in a bordering apple orchard. It is rough work, vigorous work, at times exciting work; and always the game is worth the candle. It means long tramping, it means barked shins and scratched faces, torn clothes and broken shoes, but it is an experience not soon forgotten; and last, but by no means the least, there is a supper at which a king might dine.

*Country Life in America.* November, 1902.

### **Fox Hunting by W. B. Thornton**

The incentive for invasions of nature's domain as often as may be are many. Of bird-shooting, save the pursuit of ducks, there is none. But the bay of the hound awakens all the echoes of the early morning, for these are the days when the heart of the fox-hunter is glad. There are probably no sportsmen who more thoroughly enjoy their favorite pursuit than the fox-hunters. Of these there are two classes, those of the South who ride to hounds, and those of the North who secure their brushes by a thorough knowledge of the ways and the tricks of Reynard, and by a true eye and ready shot-gun. There is sometimes a noticeable tendency on the part of the former to condemn what they term the "sneak" methods of the latter. Take not offense, you who have stood on a familiar run in the early half light of a winter morning and listened to the full-throated music of the hounds rolling across the valley, straight toward where you are waiting, only to swing suddenly, and in clear, soul-stirring melody die away down the old wood road where yesterday you kept as vain a watch. Pity their ignorance, for they know not what they decry. There is room for both classes, for often where one flourishes the other is impossible.

Deep snows, of course, effectually put a stop to fox-hunting, but January usually brings many days when the scent lies strong and the hounds tug at the leash which holds them in check. How eagerly they quarter the ground! Ah, there is a scent, cold as yet, but certain evidence that Reynard has been abroad. The younger dogs give tongue now and again as a strong taint strikes their nostrils. Excitedly they work it out, now overrunning and now with infinite patience unraveling the intricacies of the trail. But watch the veteran of the pack! Who shall say that animals have no reasoning power! Wasting no time, he casts in a wide circle, which gives him the scent so hot that in a few minutes he has Master Red going. In splendid volume, in which one can almost imagine there is the least bit of mockery, his voice rolls back down to the inexperienced youngsters struggling with the cold scent below. Instantly they give tongue in response and are away in pursuit.

Now it is that a knowledge of the country is essential. Will he take the old hill run? Will he make the famous Grassy Pond circuit which includes the back pasture, or will he go straight away for parts unknown? You elect to wait by the bars on the edge

of the sheep pasture and the cross-country run to get there first starts the perspiration, despite the sharp edge of the morning. On the still frosty air the music of the hunt vibrates, now faint and fainter until the straining ear can but just catch it, and now, as an intervening hill is circled, bursting forth clear and strong. Knowing the country, the story of the chase is read in the clamor of eager tongues as if you were there to see. You know when the wily fellow jumps from stone to stone in the brook. You are told how he ran along the stone wall and then leaped far into the field. In your mind you can see him at his old tricks on the rail fence. But old Spot knows these tricks, too, and there are but momentary breaks in the baying of the dogs. So you wait, every nerve tense; every sense concentrated to catch the first intimation of the approach of the soft-footed free booter of the thickets. All the air is filled with the insistent clamor of the dogs. You catch occasional glimpses of them now, running through the wood, but still no sign of Reynard. Then, like an apparition, a red shadow, stealing along the edge of the pasture, then boldly trotting down the road, he appears. How or whence he came you cannot say. Now he pauses to look back and to listen to the hounds trying to solve his latest puzzle. Will he come within gunshot? You hold your breath. He trots forward a few steps and then – was there an involuntary movement on your part? Without apparent haste or abruptness and yet with a swiftness which leaves you gaping foolishly, he turns aside and is gone. Where? Leave it to the dogs, and, shouldering your gun, turn home-ward defeated, yet withal enjoying defeat, for the knowledge that a red-coated free-lance worthy of all your skill still roams the hills.

Few sports, if any, quicken the powers of observation as does fox-hunting. The hunter waiting on his run is a spectator of countless little comedies and tragedies of wood-land life. There is seemingly an understanding among these wild things that the silent watcher will harm them not, but rather that he is there to avenge all that they have suffered from the red robber who has long dwelt in their midst. But more than this, there is constant entertainment furnished by Br'er Fox himself. There is no old fox-hunter but can relate countless tales of the sagacity and wit of this renegade in eluding pursuers; and it is this strategic power, this crafty intelligence, which is one of the greatest charms of the chase. January is a month when there is little else to take the lover of the gun afield, but Reynard is always ready for a run with the dogs, even in this month of ice and snow.

But the fox-hunters may not hold the field altogether alone. Bunny is to be found in bramble tangle and close-grown thickets, to be tramped out or run with beagles. When he is in mood for a run he will furnish a lively bit of entertainment. Those who love the music of the hunt find rare pleasure in listening to a brace of beagles as they unravel and bring to naught all the twists and turns and clever wiles of Bunny. Indeed, not a few put their dogs in with no intention of killing the game, but for the pure delight of watching and hearing the dogs work. It sometimes seems as if the rabbit was aware of their peaceful intentions at these times, for he will play about in a small circle for half an hour or more before holing up, affording many opportunities to observe and study the ways of this long-legged little graycoat. Indeed, he seems quite to enter into the spirit of the game, and a delightful winter's afternoon can be thus spent.

*Country Life in America.* January, 1903.

## Appendix 3. Animal Names and Natural History.

Thornton W. Burgess drew his animal stories from two intersecting sets of resources: popular and literary culture on the one hand and natural history on the other, during an era in which the appropriate relationship between the two was intensely debated (Lutts, 2001). In 1912, the Green Meadows and Green Forest comprised an enchanted world, where wild animals spoke and acted like humans, meteorological phenomena had personalities, and strict accuracy about natural history was sometimes sacrificed for characterization and story value. Nevertheless, compared to a competing “Bedtime Story” feature like “Uncle Wiggily,” Burgess’s work shows a deep understanding of the natural world, particularly as it existed in the more rural districts of Springfield, Massachusetts in 1912.

The ecology of that region has changed over the last century. Species that used to dominate have become rare; species that were once rare visitors have become common. Peter Rabbit was modeled after the New England Cottontail, which has been largely displaced by the Eastern Cottontail; Spotty the Turtle was modeled after the now threatened Spotted Turtle; Mrs. Quack was probably intended to be an American Black Duck, not a Mallard. On the other hand, the “southern” characters—Turkey Vulture, Northern Mockingbird, Virginia Opossum—have all become established breeding species in the region. Of all the characters used in 1912, only Digger the Badger has no natural relationship with the local ecology.

Burgess drew many of the names given to his characters from popular culture. “Jenny Wren” and “Tommy Tit,” for example, have long histories in British nature lore, and the name “Peter Rabbit,” which will be discussed more thoroughly in the 1913 volume of this series, was obviously drawn from the work of Beatrix Potter. Less obvious to modern readers, however, might be the origins of “Johnny Chuck” and “Unc’ Billy Possum.”

Johnny (and Polly, who will be introduced in 1913), were the subjects of a piece of verse that circulated in the 1890s, sometimes attributed to Shep Dugger—“The Wood-Chuck.”

Johnny Wood-chuck sat on a chestnut stump  
And he squinted down through an ivy clump;  
And his little red heart went ker-chump, ker-chump, ker-chump,  
Ker-chump, ker-chump, ker-chump, ker-chump, ker-chump.

For he saw Polly Wood-chuck sitting on the lap  
Of a knock-kneed, red-headed wood-chucker chap.  
So he laughed till his tail went ker-flap, ker-flap, ker-flap,  
Ker-flap, ker-flap, ker-flap, ker-flap, ker-flap.

Whether this poem introduced those names, or whether they were drawn from the surrounding culture is hard to say. At any rate, they did not originate with Burgess.

“Billy Possum” has a well-documented pre-history. While the name can be found in use before 1909, it became associated with the presidency of William (“Big Bill”)

9 INCHES  
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# BABY BILLY POSSUM GIVEN AWAY

## Everybody Crazy Over Teddy Bear's Successor

**BABY BILLY POSSUM** has been chosen the popular pet by as big a vote as his namesake "Big Bill" Taft was elected to the White House. **BILLY POSSUM** has been all the rage at the Winter resort and in fashionable circles and is going to be even more popular than **Teddy Bear** was. **BABY BILLY** is a fine specimen, made of shaggy possum, well stuffed, nine inches tall, standing erect on hind feet, with a possum tail half its foot long. His head, arms, legs, and his tail are joined on to his body so that they can be turned in any direction. He has a fine, long tail by which you can hang him up handily to sleep and you should hear him squeak when you squeeze his "tummy."

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**THE WHOLE BILLY POSSUM FAMILY**

Pillow Top is 21 inches Square

Advertisement in the *American Agriculturist*, April 3, 1909, page 30.

Howard Taft, after he reportedly requested that possum be served at a banquet in Atlanta. A company in that city created a "Billy Possum" toy as a successor to the Teddy Bear, a stuffed toy associated with Theodore Roosevelt. The name was even used in the "Bedtime Story" field before Burgess, in "How Billy Possum Woke Up," a 1910 installment of "Daddy's Bedtime Story," in which Billy is ultimately killed and served for dinner with sweet potatoes.

Thornton Burgess, like many writers at the time, was heavily influenced by the stories of Uncle Remus, and, indeed, he was frequently cited as a successor to Joel Chandler Harris, who had died in 1908. (Chandler's stories, parallel to Burgess, were first published in newspaper form (in the *Atlanta Constitution*) before being compiled into books). It was through the character of "Unc' Billy Possum" that the world and language of Uncle Remus most thoroughly entered into Burgess's tales, though the eventual elevation of the fox and rabbit conflict as the core Burgess narrative was also a clear Remus influence. Burgess appears to have referred to rabbits and foxes in the wild as "Br'er Rabbit" and "Br'er Fox." Indeed, his hand-written notes on the pre-print copies of the 1912 stories that became part of *The Adventures of Peter Cottontail*, marked them as used in the "Br'er Rabbit" book.

Finally, if this were a new publication instead of historical documentation, I might have considered revising the name of "Bobby Coon" to "Bobby Raccoon" throughout. "Coon" is a legitimate non-racist etymological derivation of "Raccoon." Given Burgess's well-documented dalliances with Minstrel show culture, however, there is another level at which this name might be interpreted. I would advise anyone using this volume to create new publications to make the switch.



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